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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 5
MAY 1997

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N64 EXCLUSIVE
CLAYFIGHTER!

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MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
DUKE NUKEM 64
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

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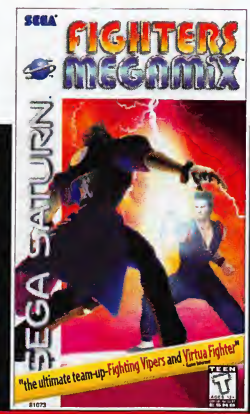


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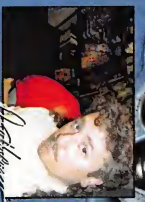
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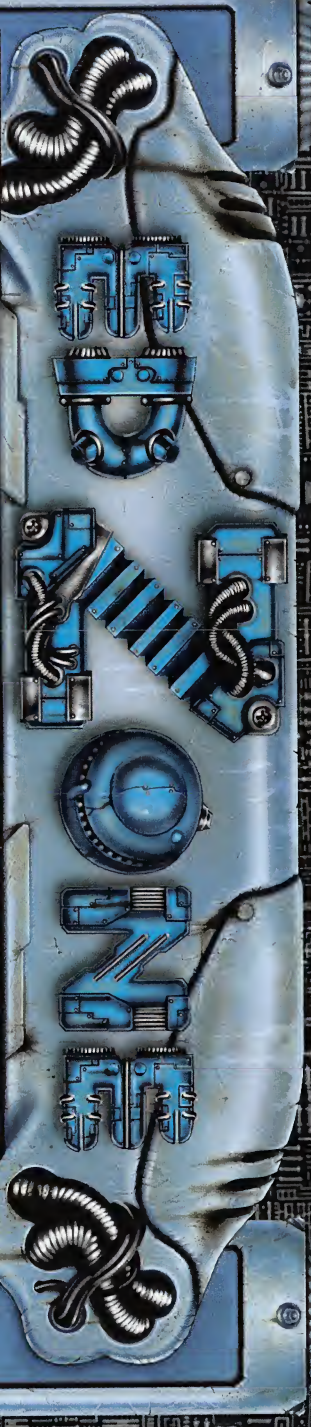
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From the moment Nintendo's revolutionary NES hit the market back in '85, one name was synonymous in terms of competition: Sega. In the years preceding, Sega went from a distant second to a close rival, and then (after ushering in the 16-bit era through careful planning with their Japanese affiliate) took the lead. It was a moment in videogame history I'll never forget. The underdog had won, and for the first time, Nintendo looked less than almighty.

And so it seemed that in entering into the era of 32-bit gaming amongst the fledgling 3DO Sega would continue its reign. Sony knew nothing of videogames prior to this point, and Nintendo's no-show CD-ROM all combined to strengthen Sega's position. With Treasure, GameArts, Climax, Sonic Software Planning, Team Andromedia, and AM2 cranking out some of the world's best videogames, it certainly looked as if Sega would continue to run away from the pack. Obviously, this has not been the case. The question so many GF readers are asking now is, "Where has the Sega of old gone, and are they ever coming back?"

And that's the focus of this month's Ed Zone. The way I see it, Sega of America, amidst a thunderstorm of praise and notoriety (due highly to some of the most creative TV ads ever) and a flood of hot Japanese software gained an overwhelming sense of security and began to expand at a fever pitch. Internal development soared as Sega introduced such revelations as FMV and interactive software... their first mistake. By trying to appeal to the mass market they began to alienate the Sega user, weaned on Sega classics like *Phantasy Star*, *Landstalker*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Gunstar Heroes*, *Lunar*, *Sphered*, and countless other Sega-exclusive titles. They didn't want to "interact", they wanted the action rush of *Sonic* and *Gunstar* along with the RPGs they'd come to know throughout the days of the Master System and Genesis. But these were either slow in coming or simply forgotten as SOA continued to spend their development dollars on attempting to re-invent the wheel. Turns out the round one worked just fine...

Enter Sony. Overnight masters of 3rd-party etiquette and developer-friendly, Sony began their assault with the beautifully-designed PlayStation. In less than two years they've rekindled the spirit that helped Sega capture the US market. Japanese RPGs are making a US comeback (most notably the ones that put the N in Nintendo), action and adventure is at an all time high, sports are better than ever, and as a sign of good faith they've even imported alternative games like the soon-to-be-released *Tail of the Sun* and *Paradise the Rapper*. That's like saying, "Whoever you are, we want to make you happy even if we don't sell a million copies. Smart business. In turn, Sega's market share has dropped as gamers flock to the Sony camp... and the trigger effect begins. Third parties are apprehensive, delays ensue, lay-offs begin and key people are lost. Then comes the Nintendo 64 which, in America, eclipses everything with hardly any software and... cartridge prices. The US market is indeed a strange one. Here's where I could get side tracked into an entirely new domain. Maybe next month.

So here we are, and the question is clear. How is Sega going to recapture that old magic? Or for that matter, do they even need/want to in the video game arena? Sega is diversifying like mad. The union with Bandai insures mega toy sales here and overseas, GameWorks is a major enterprise and the Sega Channel has yet to reach its peak. And then there's SegaSoft, the kids' line, etc. Perhaps Sega is happy with the market share they currently hold in the wake of these other ventures. Of course, I hope that is not the case. As a 10-year Sega fan, I can't imagine an industry without them always threatening.

I believe they need to focus on their Japanese resources more intensely. Look at the success Working Designs has had doing just that. By releasing exclusively Japanese import RPGs and the like, WD has garnered a loyal following and are actually a large reason why so many Sega gamers are still around. The recent acquisition of Shuji Usumi (former VP of product licensing at Sony who is now overseeing product development) is an exciting appointment which points in that very direction. He spent eight years at Sony Corp. in Japan prior to helping launch the PS.

Beyond that, Uji Naka should use the Saturn's 2D capabilities (2D is back, you know) to craft the ultimate *Sonic*, and then never forget him again (just don't change the music). Next, instead of spending big money on high profile ad campaigns for Coin-op ports that everyone will buy anyway (essentially anything AM2), target Treasure, GameArts, Climax, SSP and the other Japanese Saturn super powers' games. Marketed the way they deserve, these companies could have a major impact, similar to what Miyamoto, Square, Enix, and Rare have done for Nintendo.

These are things that I believe would begin to deliver Sega back to their core audience (or begin to at least). You're probably wondering by now why I care so much in the first place... It's because I can't imagine the industry without Sega, just as I cannot without Nintendo. It's in all of our best interests to concern ourselves with such matters, and I still believe that if you scream loud enough someone will hear you. Of course, these are just my opinions... I could be wrong.

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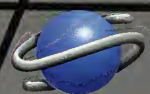


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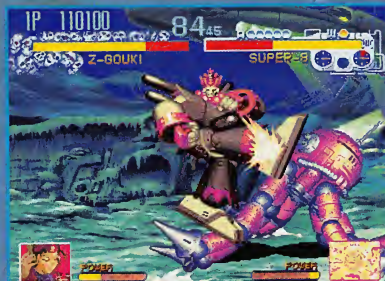


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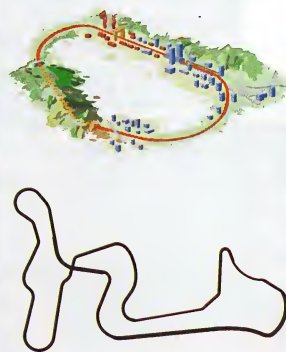
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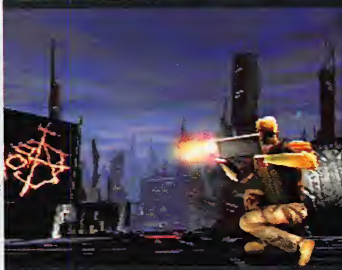
the more cash you accumulate. Use it to modify your existing car, or save it to finance a trickier, quicker ride. See the face on the hood of that car? His handsome mug was lacquered on with the Custom Paint & Team Logo Designer. No bolt was left untorqued in an effort to make Rage Racer the most realistic street racing experience. The only question is, how fast can you race to the store and buy it? **POWERED BY namco®**

IN DEVELOPMENT



Activision's latest (and quite possibly greatest) console title represents a significant step forward for the videogame industry. The reason? It is the first time a major "A" list Hollywood action star has allowed his voice and likeness to appear in a videogame. Sure there have been actors in games before, but normally only through FMV, and certainly no one who commands over \$20 million dollars a picture. The actor? Bruce Willis. The game? *Apocalypse*.

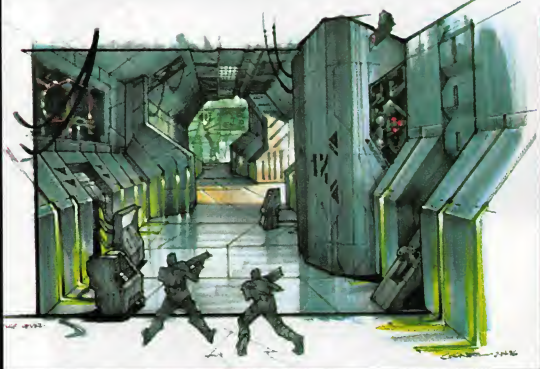
Apocalypse is an experimental collaboration of entertainment



vironments, such as prisons, sewers and war factories. A cyber scanned and motion captured Bruce Willis plays Trey Kinkaid, your 'virtual partner' (in essence a computer controlled player 2) who fights alongside you and responds to your performance with his own actions and comments. Willis recorded several movies worth of dialogue for *Apocalypse* and was reportedly quite enthusiastic about the project, taking a stake in Activision as part of his payment.

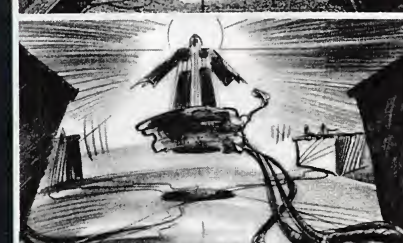
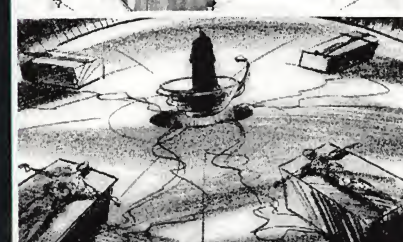
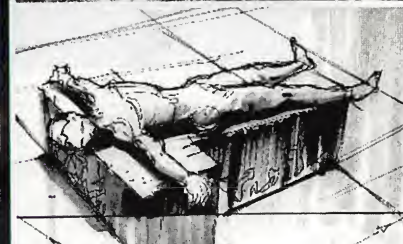
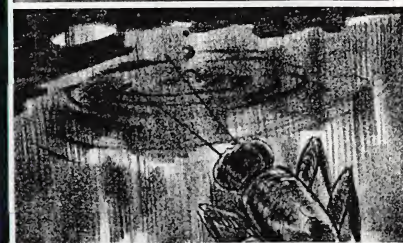
The story revolves around a character called the Reverend, a religious megalomaniac who intends to bring about the end of the world by using nanotechnology to resurrect the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Now it's up to you and your partner Trey to stop him before it's too late.

Even though the engine is still very early, the framework is in place for a really cool game, with or without Willis' involvement. The conceptual art is awesome and the game's designers seem to have their feet planted firmly on the ground (wisely, they've chosen a *Robotron X*-style control set up). So who knows? *Apocalypse* may end up delivering the best of both worlds. **K**



mediums that could, if it succeeds, pave the way for future Hollywood involvement in videogames. Of course, that could be construed as an evil thing, but in this case Activision is quick to point out that *Apocalypse* is being designed first and foremost as a great game, with Willis' presence merely providing the charismatic icing on the gameplay cake.

The game itself is a 3rd-person scrolling shooter (reminiscent of *Contra: Legacy of War*) that features texture mapped polygon characters fighting their way through numerous futuristic 3D envi-



TO HELL WITH YOU,



Only the N64 could handle this game.

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Due to the yummy codes this month, I hardly had the room to list the winner's codes.... But I do have some DOOM 64 stuff thanks to Hikaru, Blinky Da Clown, and Nightmare and their awesome "DOOM-ING" skills!

AWW YEAH! Sorry fellas! We got ya this time!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER:

RAYMOND KELLY, RIDGEFIELD, NEW JERSEY

FIRST PRIZE WINNER:

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SECOND PRIZE WINNER:

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Now there is a way for you to see all of the lovely CG in Tekken 2 without having to beat the game every time! Just have a memory card with all 25 characters selectable, then load the game and turn on your system. At the black PlayStation loading screen, press and hold **DIAGONAL UP-RIGHT** on the D-Pad, **CIRCLE, X, AND SELECT**. Continue to hold the **ALL** of the buttons until you see the "Namco Presents" screen fade out. You will then see a list of all of the Tekken 2 CG from the game! Pretty nifty trick, huh? - Waka



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HAPPY HUNTING CODES!!

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POWERSLAVE SEGA SATURN **DEATH TANK!**

Here is the code to access the infamous Death Tank bonus game hidden in the Saturn version of Powerslave without collecting all 23 Team Dolls! In the options, go to the 'Remap Control' screen and swap around A with C, X with Z and L with R. Then simply return to the title screen and a new option for Death Tank will appear. But what is it? How did it get there? You'll just have to find out for yourselves.



CONGRATS TO THIS MONTH'S WINNERS! REMEMBER-"GXTV" ... "GXTV" ... OR "LOLLIPOPS" "LOLLIPOPS" ... WHATEVER THE PRIZE, SEND IN THOSE CODES! - WAKA & CHIEF HAMBLETON

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DOOM 64 — NINTENDO 64 — DOOM 64'S INNARDS ARE REVEALED!

By now most of you N64 owners will have played and probably beaten *Doom 64*. But have you uncovered all the game's darkest secrets yet? In order to beat the game properly you must find all four secret levels and collect the 3 Doom artifacts that power-up your most deadly weapon: the laser. And here's how to do it.



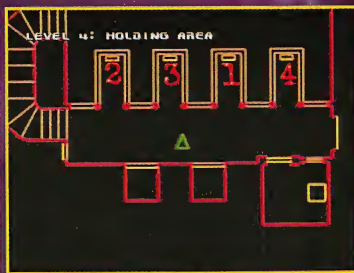
STAGING AREA (leads to HECTIC)

The exit to Hectic, and the hardest secret to locate in the entire game, is found on the first level. By destroying all ten explosive barrels on the level you open a hidden exit in the secret room behind where you start (where the berserk pack is). What you must do is blow up all the barrels EXCEPT the one just to the right of your starting location (see picture). Then teleport back to the start, shoot the barrel and quickly run into the secret room. The door only stays open a few seconds.



SECRET LEVEL 1: HECTIC

Hectic may be short, but it's one of the toughest levels in the game. Do the rooms in this order: orange key, blue key, yellow key. You can collect the green armor if you're careful. Collect all the keys and hit the protected switch (see picture) to activate a CHEAT MENU. Just pause at any time and go to the new option: FEATURES. Of course, if you're playing the game legitimately Hectic gives you the rocket launcher early.



HOLDING AREA (leads to OUTPOST OMEGA)

Near the level's exit you will see four elevated platforms with switches at the end (see picture). Hit the switches in the order shown (third, first, second, fourth) and the circular platforms will level out allowing you to reach the secret exit. In order to reach the first circular platform you must strafe run (run at 45 degrees).



SECRET LEVEL 2: OUTPOST OMEGA

This level lets you collect the Laser and the first Laser power-up. In the room with the four cages, push against this panel to open a secret area with the red key in it. Then, when you are in the multi-level maze section you must shoot 3 switches to collect the Laser and lower the entrance to the room with the Laser power up. Check all the walls to find a moving platform with the laser on it.



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ALTAR OF PAIN (leads to THE LAIR)

At the point where you collect the yellow key run out onto the platform where the blue Soul Sphere is. Then turn and face in this direction and run into the wall. The wall is invisible and you will enter a hidden area leading to the secret exit.



SECRET LEVEL 3: THE LAIR

As you walk onto the floorboards in the raised right hand section behind where the Laser power-up is located, it triggers a switch to appear on a wall behind the laser. Shoot the switch and that triggers another switch to appear to your left through the square window. Shoot that switch and the power-up will lower.

SPAWNED FEAR

(leads to IN THE VOID)

As you approach the level's exit (through the yellow door) and climb the stairs pictured you will trigger a secret door back outside. Go back out through the yellow key door, turn left and enter the cave to reach the secret exit.



SECRET LEVEL 4: IN THE VOID

As you approach the level's exit and you walk past this overhang the screen will shake. Return back to the room where the last Laser power-up is located and a switch will have appeared. Hit the switch to transport the power-up and quickly run to the area shown.



THE ABSOLUTION

The first power-up makes your laser fire faster, the second makes it fire two beams and the third makes it fire three beams! But not only do the Demon icons act as laser power-ups, you can also use them as keys to close the three portals on the last level! Simply push against the three switches to stop the monsters from teleporting in!

See this and much, much more in
GAMEFANBOOKS - Doom 64 STRATEGY GUIDE!
 Coming soon!

TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. Mario Kart 64 - N64
2. Mario 64 - N64
3. Tomb Raider - PS
4. Turok - N64
5. Star Wars: SOTE - N64
6. Resident Evil - PS
7. Tekken 2 - PS
8. SoulBlade - PS
9. WaveRace 64 - N64
10. Daytona CCE - Saturn



READERS' MOST WANTED

1. Zelda 64 - N64
2. Final Fantasy VII - PS
3. Tekken 3 - PS
4. StarFox 64 - N64
5. Resident Evil 2 - PS
6. Doom 64 - N64
7. Yoshi's Island 64 - N64
8. SF III - Arcade
9. VF3 - Saturn
10. Wild Arms - PS



GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. Castlevania X - PS
2. Wild Arms - PS
3. Shining the Holy Ark - Saturn
4. Doom 64 - N64
5. Cyberbots - Saturn
6. Blast Corps - N64
7. MegaMan 8 - PS
8. Human Grand Prix - N64
9. Metal Slug - Saturn
10. Guardian Heroes - Saturn



1. Blast Corps - N64
2. Turok - N64
3. Street Fighter III - Arcade
4. Rally Cross - PS
5. Choro Q2 - PS
6. Jet Moto - PS
7. Cyberbots - Saturn
8. CoolBoarders - PS
9. Black Dawn - PS
10. Agile Warrior F111X - PS



1. Blast Corps - N64
2. Castlevania X - PS
3. Sangoku Musou - PS
4. Raystorm - PS
5. Cyberbots - Saturn
6. Street Fighter III - Arcade
7. Choro Q2 - PS
8. Super GT - Arcade
9. Bushido Blade - PS
10. Cotton - TurboDuo



1. Death Tank (PowerSlave) - Saturn
2. Castlevania X - PS
3. Final Fantasy VII - PS
4. Street Fighter III - Arcade
5. House of the Dead - Arcade
6. Cyberbots - Saturn
7. Doom 64 - N64
8. Blast Corps - N64
9. Manx TT - Saturn
10. StarFox - SNES



1. Suikoden - PS
2. Persona - PS
3. KoF '96 - Saturn
4. Samurai Shodown IV - NeoGeo
5. Soul Blade - PS
6. Herzog Zwei - Genesis
7. Bushido Blade - PS
8. Space Harrier - Saturn
9. Quake - PC
10. Trouble Shooter - Genesis



1. Death Tank (PowerSlave) - Saturn
2. Bushido Blade - PS
3. Castlevania X - PS
4. Wild Arms - PS
5. Guardian Heroes - Saturn
6. Blast Corps - N64
7. Bare Knuckle 2 - Mega Drive
8. Nights - Saturn
9. ElectroCop - Lynx
10. Diablo - PC



DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:

Dominick Meissner
Designer, **LOBOTOMY SOFTWARE**

1. Final Fantasy VII - PS
2. Turok - N64
3. Castlevania X - PS
4. Bushido Blade - PS
5. RockMan 8 - PS
6. Seiken Densetsu - SNES
7. Soul Edge - PS
8. Fighters Megamix - Saturn
9. Zelda: Link's Awakening - GB
10. Mario 64 - N64

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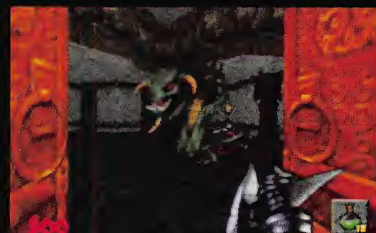


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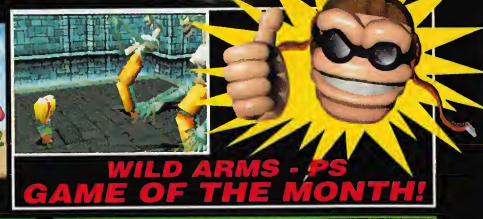
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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



WARGODS
NINTENDO 64
FIGHTING

The 1st problem I had playing *WarGods* N64 was the 3D joystick. Neither the D-pad or analog stick provide accurate enough response vs this insane CPU AI. If you like *WG* and really want everything out of it buy a good arcade stick. As far as the translation goes, Midway & Eurocom have done a fantastic job as this is purely the version to own. I find the game itself, when taken lightly, an OK cliché fighter. 3D with *MK/SF* controls. It's not a deep strategic game but an entertaining one nevertheless. If you're into that sort of thing. My main complaint? The walking animation... Polygonal constipation?

G C P M O 70
 (8) (8) (7) (7) (8)

For all intents and purposes, *WarGods* is *Mortal Kombat 3D*. The characters may be new, but the setting and gameplay are all too familiar. If you like the idea of *MK*-style gameplay in a 3D environment then *WarGods* is for you. Of course, that also means you're mentally ill, but I guess that goes with the territory. Midway are to be commended on taking the time to improve the N64 version of *WarGods* over all others, but in my opinion they wasted their time. Still, this could be the last Midway game EVER to feature fatalities, so gore junkies should get their kicks while they can.

G C P M O 66
 (7) (6) (6) (7) (6)

I'll just come right out and say it: I don't like this game. I could care less that it's passé to say that I never liked *MK*, but it's true, and this is basically a 3D *MK*. I must commend Eurocom for taking the extra time to actually improve this version over the arcade, but that's like trying to turn *Mama's Family* into quality TV. I suppose if you like *MK*, this 3D take might be satisfactory, though it's far too issue-laden for me. What sorry state do we exist in where this is the only 3D fighter for N64?

G C P M O 68
 (6) (6) (6) (7) (6)

DORAEMON
NINTENDO 64
EPOCH
ADVENTURE

He's the little blue cat with the Trans-Dimensional pouch! Sing it folks! *Doraemon* is *Mario 64* without Miyamoto, uh, pretty much. It's the same engine, so graphically it's very cool, and you do all the same stuff, it's just not garnished as nicely. Well, not nearly as nicely. Compared to what's available here however, *Doraemon* should be considered at least a strong B title. So if you're starving for more *Mario*-esque 3D (and who isn't?), no Japanese is required, so why not taste a little Japanese culture? I thought it tasted pretty good... just like chicken!

G C P M O 75
 (8) (8) (5) (6) (8)

I'm surprised it's taken this long for the first *Mario 64* clone to arrive, but then there hasn't been a whole lot of 3rd party N64 software coming out of Japan recently. *Doraemon* is a blatant rip off of NCL's masterpiece in almost every conceivable way: graphics, sound, control, camera, and most of all gameplay. Still, *Mario 64* is an amazing game, and by merely being half as good, *Doraemon* manages to be worthy. Taken on its own, it's great fun, and the variety of controllable characters are a nice touch. But if *Mario 64* didn't exist, neither would this.

G C P M O 81
 (8) (8) (8) (6) (5)

Here we have the first true *Mario 64* clone. The engine, the design, literally everything in *Doraemon* looks like it was...umm... inspired by *Mario 64*. Thankfully, this inspiration couldn't have come from a better game, and *Doraemon* adds to the formula. Four other friends accompany Japan's favorite blue pussy cat, so with 5 unique characters to use (each with their own personalized items) the game takes on a whole new appeal. It's a little short, with only 17 levels, but the environments are huge and somehow very addicting (as in 'sure, I'll explore this'). The music is death to the ears, and some sound effects reach a level of high-pitch annoyance that only dogs could appreciate, but otherwise the game is aesthetically sound. A decent little 3D platformer, but not spectacular.

G C P M O 78
 (8) (7) (7) (2) (3)

BRAMA FORCE
PLAYSTATION
JALECO
CORRIDOR

As those in the know at GameFan will tell you, I am not a corridor player. The genre's just not for me, and Jaleco/Genki's *Brahma Force* makes little headway towards altering that personal preference. While I must commend the well done and intuitive control, there isn't that much else here to light my fire. The fighting game style 2D backdrops are visually disheartening, as are the somewhat lame and boring mechanical enemies. Merely an OK game in my book.

G C P M O 77
 (7) (8) (7) (7) (6)

I'd have to say that I was pleasantly surprised by *Brahma Force*. The graphics are clean and appropriate to the theme, with control that deserves kudos just for putting everything where it should be. The level design, while visually repetitive, is actually quite varied from area to area with a great deal of Jumping Flash style platform action required. Unfortunately, the enemy drones are pretty boring and therefore un-satisfying to kill. Still, an enjoyable corridor experience - if you can live without shooting your dinosaurs or demons. They don't call me DJ Bellojger for nothin', you know.

G C P M O 83
 (7) (8) (8) (7) (6)

I ended up enjoying this game a little more than I initially thought I would. Corridor games, while I do play them on occasion, are not exactly my cup of tea. But *Brahma Force*'s solid control and better than average three dimensional level layout had me enjoying myself. The occasional massive boss was also greatly appreciated as was the intermittent and intro CG. If you like corridor games, especially those with a Japanese mech flavor, *Brahma Force* should do you nicely.

G C P M O 81
 (7) (8) (8) (7) (6)

THUNDER TRUCK
PLAYSTATION
PSYGNOSIS
RACING

Once you get past the low speeds and find the right vehicle for your particular style, *TTR* begins to grow on you. The scenery is lush Psygnosis gold, the characters are bursting with personality (in and out of the cars) and there's more than enough game here for even the most hard core fan. Three modes of play keeps it interesting and the special effects are kickin'. The pop-up does not effect the gameplay so I can live with that too. It ain't *VIX*, but I like it!!

G C P M O 85
 (9) (8) (7) (7) (8)

There seems to be a torrent of off-road racers flooding the GameFan offices at the moment, and with the exception of *Rally Cross*, they've all been pretty crap. So how does *Thunder Truck* measure up? Not bad actually. I like the tight control and the vehicle interacts convincingly with the terrain. But why, oh, why is it so easy to damage your truck? You actually get penalized for catching air—one of the coolest parts of the game. The graphics are smooth and well lit, albeit marred by some harsh pop-up, while the music fits the action perfectly. The whole thing also seemed a little slow, but I guess you get used to it. Not bad.

G C P M O 80
 (7) (8) (8) (8) (5)

Hmm, *Thunder Truck*... The characters are excellent. The sound and graphics, acceptable. The control is a bit goofy, and feels a bit over-sensitive. My biggest gripe with this game: Catching big air, only to be taken out of the race by a broken suspension. I've been told *Rally Cross* (which I love!) was just too realistic for a game, but if you're going to be realistic, shouldn't the realism add to the game, instead of taking out one of the funnest parts of a game? *TTR*'s pretty good, if you don't mind that little fact, though. I guess we all prefer our own slices of reality... How's the new laugh coming, Shidoshi?

G C P M O 72
 (8) (6) (7) (7) (7)

OVERBLOOD
PLAYSTATION
ELECTRONIC ARTS
ADVENTURE

At first glance, one may think they've reached pre-rendered adventure heaven. *Overblood*'s textures are without flaw as these environments are rich with detail. The problems occur as soon as they make the character jump. He no likey the jump. It's a bit linear as well. Otherwise this is a solid and extremely well made game that will please anyone fond of the category, which, by the way, I don't normally care for. Unless it has the word *Evil* in the title. This one is too slow for me.

G C P M O 75
 (9) (6) (7) (6) (8)

Overblood has issues. The graphics are phenomenal—some of the best in the genre—but they do little to hide the problematic gameplay. With a 3D engine this incredible (and the huge environments it supports) the game should be completely non-linear. Instead, you're led from puzzle to puzzle, often completely cut off from further exploration. I appreciate the fact that many of these scenarios are isolated to give the game a cinematic feel (complete with story CG at every turn), but this begins to get old. Ultimately, the lame fighting system could fall you, the camera will annoy you, and the stiff controls might kill you. The game is huge, though, so 3D adventure fans should enjoy the quest.

G C P M O 80
 (9) (6) (7) (6) (7)

Don't be fooled. Just looking at the screen shots, this game looks amazing. Pick it up and play for a bit and that illusion is completely shattered. The control and collision are so bad that simply moving forward with seemingly no obstacles in your path becomes a tedious chore. The control is way too imprecise, and what's worse, the game is constantly putting you in situations where this failing is slapping you in the face. So much time was obviously spent on the environment in this game that it's hard to believe that something as crucial as player control could be so screwed.

G C P M O 77
 (8) (6) (6) (7) (8)



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**NEED FOR SPEED 2
PLAYSTATION
ELECTRONIC ARTS
RACING**

See that shot to my left... purdy, huh? Well, do not be fooled, my friends. Looks can be deceiving. Sure, certain elements in *NFS2* are great, but the overall package has some problems. The frame rate is less than impressive, but that I can live with. It's the portions of track that actually give the sensation of virtual stillness that really bother me. On a positive note, the course design is excellent and the game is put together and balanced pretty well. But on the PS among fierce competition (*Rage Racer* hurts *NFS2* badly) the polygon problems are unforgivable.


G C P M O 60
7 6 6 7 6

Need For Speed is one of the few games that was better on 3DO than PS, and after seeing *NFS2* on PS you can't help but imagine what it would be like on 3DO, because it sure can't be any worse than this! *NFS2* features a mediocre frame rate, terrible control, bad pop-up and a road that seems to stand still when you go fast! That's just wrong! The real cars are a cool hook, and the tracks are actually pretty well thought out, but the whole deal is let down by the weak game engine. I know *NFS* is popular, but I think even *NFS* fans are going to be disappointed with this one. Try before you buy.

G C P M O 55
6 5 6 7 7

Oh Lordy, the 3-D engine in this game is so sub-par. Marvel in seeing the road texture seemingly come to a halt as you blast through canyon passes. Thrill to the horrendous frame rate. This could have been a good game, as the premise is sound and the track layouts are good. There's also a great replay system and the two player mode is decent, in that it's not much worse looking than the one player. Too bad, this coulda been a contenda.

G C P M O 61
6 6 6 7 7



**MACROSS VFX
PLAYSTATION
BANDAI
SHOOTING**

Oh man, hurt me why don't you!! An anime series of legendary proportions, which I love, gets a heapin' helpin of a beatin' with the ugly stick. This game is just poor in every sense of the word. Obviously created in mere months to cash in on the anime. Bandai should be ashamed of themselves. Beyond the animation clips which aren't even full screen, everything about *VFX* is disastrous. Will the 2D Saturn version help mend these wounds? I sure hope so.

G C P M O 25
4 4 5 1 2

Macross anime: cool!
Macross PS game: poor!
That's right people, this 'game' is an unfettered tragedy that makes the Titanic look watertight. Ugly, jerky visuals; repetitive, tedious gameplay; sad, SAD tunes and poor FMV. Even die hard *Macross* fans should say ixnay to this one.

G C P M O 20
4 4 4 1 4

I know *Macross*. I like *Macross*. This game, dear sirs at UniT, is NO *Macross*. If this had been done to a series that I loved, like *Evangelion* or *Tenchi Muyo*, I would probably be assembling a letter bomb addressed to the programmers right now instead of writing this viewpoint. Horrible graphics, horrible music, horrible gameplay, horrible control, even after more than a year of delays. I'm honestly surprised Bandai allowed this game to come out. I'd be willing to bet that I could open up a copy of C++, let my cat walk around on the keyboard, and come up with a better game than this.

G C P M O 33
6 4 5 2 3



**WILD ARMS
PLAYSTATION
SONY/RPG
GAME OF THE MONTH**

This is a spectacular RPG. In fact, if not for *FF7*, *Wild Arms* would definitely be RPG of the year so far. Never mind though, Sony's got 'em both! And if you're smart, you'll buy 'em both! Awesome music (I even bought the soundtrack), a great story with fantastic characters, and some of the best fighting I've ever seen (including summonable beasts which fill the screen with dancing light) will keep you crazy-glued to this huge feast of an RPG. Add to that, rendered characters in the overhead mode (it's about time) and super detailed locales and you've got RPG bliss.

G C P M O 95
8 9 10 9 9

Hey, remember me? Just thought I'd stop by and educate y'all 'bout a brown-toned gem that's one of the finest RPGs in recent memory. Sure, it can't compete with *FFVIII* (except in the category of brown-ness), but there's no better game to play while you wait for that masterpiece. *Wild Arms* is full of cool puzzles, well-designed enemies, good tunes, and very brown locations. This'll probably be the 2nd best RPG you play this year, and definitely the brownest.

G C P M O 92
7 7 9 9 6

I can only look at so many 'CG renders' before I snap. *Wild Arms* is all traditional, loaded with the beautiful 2D artwork I crave in an RPG. Cool 3D battles too, with some truly frightening enemies. But the game, oh, the game! This is such an enjoyable quest. It's not terribly difficult, but the dungeons offer countless little *Zelda*-style puzzles, an unexpected feature in your typical RPG. The music is excellent (sometimes spectacular) and the translation is very well done. *Wild Arms* is a super-solid RPG well worth your money.

G C P M O 90
8 8 9 9 7



**LEYNOS 2
SATURN
MASAYA
PLATFORM SHOOTING**

A series which I've loved since the impossible *Target Earth* gets a huge kick in the butt by the 2D savvy Saturn. The options in *Leynos 2* are absolutely stunning as this version is as deep in strategy as it is in action. Choosing and setting up your mech for each level has never been this integral a part of the game, but it's certainly welcome as it only adds to the overall feeling of the quest. Graphically, detail is high, scaling is prominent and the art is first rate. A top-notch game that should get the full SOA treatment... We'll see.

G C P M O 80
8 8 9 7 7

I loved the original *ASL* with a passion, and believe me: No one was looking forward to this sequel more than me. So does it live up to my expectations? Hell, yeah! *ASL2* rocks in a big way. It has some problems (namely, it's too short and the animation is occasionally lacking), but the hardcore 2D blasting action and advanced mech management sections more than make up for that. The bottom line is: If you liked *ASL* you're going to love *ASL2*. At times the sprite count is just insane! Feel the Saturn 2D power! Now let's hope it gets an official release.

G C P M O 85
8 8 9 7 8

Like any hard-core Sega fan, I loved the original *Leynos* (in all of its impossible to beat glory). The sequel keeps with the same formula: mad sprites, perfect control, and a running storyline. The Saturn is such a 2D monster! It's hard to believe there's so many detailed little sprites flying around the screen at once. The game is a little too short, but you'll have to earn your way into the cool ending which takes mucho skill. Besides, the gameplay is so, so solid you'll probably come back many times. US release? Think Sega, think.

G C P M O 83
8 8 8 7 9



**MANX TT
SATURN
SEGA
RACING**

Wow, a Sega racer that I really don't care for, who'd of ever think it? *Manx* is just to unrealistic and one dimensional for my taste. The cycle's turning radius is broken, and there's but a mere two tracks (each mirrored to equal four), wow, thanks a lot. I never got the feeling I was in a realistic or fair race as the CPU bikes sweep through turns as I wrestle my bike to and fro attempting to negotiate the terrain as smoothly. The analog's not much better. I have no idea what my comrades are smokin'. 50 bucks? No way! I'd rather play *Hang-On Genesis*, honestly.

G C P M O 68
8 5 6 7 6

Considering this is the first AM conversion to be developed out of house, it really isn't that bad. The courses are detailed, the control is tight (particularly with the analog pad) and apart from some occasional clipping issues, the graphics are above average. What's more, the split-screen two player mode actually works for a change! However, there are problems. The CPU AI is horrendously cheap, and a couple of new tracks would have been nice. Still a decent fix for speed junkies and another notch in Sega's belt.

G C P M O 86
8 8 8 7 8

This is such a surprising conversion. First things first: The graphics are very good. We're talking a *Daytona COE* (import) level of detail. Some of you may scoff at that statement, but if 30 fps, great vehicle models, and excellent trackside detail translates into BAD for you, umm, what am I missing? The control is a beautiful thing as well, especially with the Saturn's perfect analog controller (D-pad with *Manx*? Don't even go there!). Two tracks (four layouts if you mirror and flip 'em) is not enough, but they're extremely well-designed. Except for the sometimes cheap AI, *Manx TT* is a top-quality racer.

G C P M O 83
8 10 8 6 7



**REAL BOUT
NEO-GENO
SNK
FIGHTING**

Striding into the fighting arena is Terry Bogard. And his brother Andy. You may have met them before. Like twenty times before... But no matter, because this game has large explosions, men in both tight-fitting and wide-leg pantsloons, bouncing breasts (Mai shows no sign of sagging) and the Chief's very favorite fighting game character... an elderly vegetable gardener named Tung Fu Rue... SNK has obviously lobotomized their developers and encrypted the old adage "It ain't broken... don't fix it!" into their skulls. However, even if Mr. Rox is beginning to sicken himself of the *Fatal Fury* series, I'm still happy to pummel Geese Howard into the dirt... again. And of course, despite this tired game engine, this still pummels *War Gods* into small squishy pieces.

G C P M O 82
8 6 8 7 0

Real Bout Fatal Fury Special is not the crowning jewel in SNK's fighting game lineup, in my opinion. That doesn't mean, however, that it's not worth a look. Graphics are good, music and sound effects solid, the gameplay has some different, innovative features, and hey, it's got Blue Mary. I guess my big complaint is that I don't feel they are doing all that they could with the game. Still, it's another quality title from the true fighting game company, and *Fatal Fury* fans should be more than pleased with the series' progression.

G C P M O 85
7 8 7 8 6

Another day, another SNK fighter. *Real Bout's* the latest in the long line of *Fatal Fury* games, and it's probably the best of the series. The art isn't quite SNK's best, but it does have the familiar sort of chunky feeling of an SNK game. Now I'll readily admit to being spoiled by the jaw dropping animation of *SFIII*, but I've seen better animation in some of SNK's other titles. Fans of the series will no doubt find a lot here to have fun with, not the least of which are some hilarious voice samples. I doubt it will convert non-*FF* fans, though.

G C P M O 80
7 7 8 7 6

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IN DEVELOPMENT

SHINY HAPPY PEOPLE MAKING GAMES

This month Nightmare and Substance D braved a perilous, all-expenses paid limousine ride to the den of iniquity that is Shiny HQ, to check out *Wild 9*, PlayStation MDK, and generally shoot the breeze with the tall one himself: Dave Perry (six foot eight inches and growing, fact fans!). As always our trip was filled with surprises, particularly the astonishing revelation that... well, you want to know, you have to read!



MDK...

GF: What does MDK really stand for?

DP: Max, Dr. Fluke Hawkins, and Kurt. We've had fun with that because everyone was questioning it.

GF: What are your thoughts on MDK now that it's been released?

DP: MDK opened a lot of doors for us, and we got real focused. After *EWJ* and *EWJ2* we discussed whether we wanted to stay with 2D or go 3D, and I chose 3D. Since then, we've really gone for it aggressively. So the whole company went through a year making that transition. Now we have a plan.

GF: Have you been happy with the response?

DP: MDK was reviewed in Germany as the best PC game ever made!!

GF: They allowed it in Germany?

DP: It's not really that violent a game. It's kind of funny. It's not shooting people, so they kind of let it through. The game itself has been really popular.

GF: You must be pleased.

DP: Yes, but we have a real problem now: If the press gets a bad game from us they're going to kill us. If we average 95% for MDK and we ship a game that gets 60%'s, we're dead! So we're going to keep working on games before we release them. I mean, I'd kill a bad game before I released it.

simply designing the characters. This time round we've used a guy called Kevin Munroe who worked on *Ren and Stimpy* and *The Simpsons*. The writers are actually from the *Batman* and *Spiderman* cartoon series!

GF: Where did the original idea come from?

DP: It was originally Tom Tanaka's idea, but then Kevin ended up taking over the whole thing and building all the characters out of it. Tom originally designed it as a women, which was interesting because now that *Tomb Raider's* come out the whole 'women thing' has been done. But at the time it was original. The idea for the torture weapon was mine.

GF: You mentioned that before. Something about a guy who would annoy you and the ability to torture him.

DP: It has to do with game design and the stuff we worry about. Basically, if you break gameplay—break the gamer's control—that pisses them off. We had an idea in *Wild 9* that there would be this character who would take away your control deliberately just to piss you off, and then, when you eventually found him, you would take great pleasure from torturing him.

GF: Who's the main character in *Wild 9*?

DP: The main character is a guy named

it can also be a light or make a noise. It turns out there's a creature living inside the Rig called Bangus with a silent B. Bangus is a bad term on his planet. So Wex is a mixture of a couple of things. He's got a humorous side—the comedy sidekick thing—and a bitchin' weapon that lets him torture things!

GF: What's the story?

DP: *Wild 9* all takes place on a planet were the main bad guy, Karn, just spends all day shooting down stuff for fun. Anything that flies by, he shoots it down. And if nothing flies by, he just shoots at what he's already shot down! He'll just shoot at the old debris, and break it up some more. So the whole planet around Karn's main gun has been completely scorched and torn to death. Wex and the *Wild 9* are some of the people who got shot down by Karn, and find themselves trapped on this planet.

GF: Tell us about Karn.

DP: Karn is just this huge, huge, impossible to beat, huge, enjoy pain, huge kind of head that sits on a ceiling.

GF: Impossible to beat?

DP: Yeah. He's just so big! Unless your weapon was as big as house you just couldn't do any damage.

GF: So that makes the end-game boss confrontation kind of interesting doesn't it?

DP: You could say that (smiles). We already have the end sequence designed.

GF: From what I've seen, *Wild 9* looks like it's going to be a 2.5D game—2D control in a 3D world.

DP: Yeah. The problem we have is that joypads are still 2D. I know people say, "Oh the N64 pad is 3D," but just try walking across a bridge in *Mario 64*. You can't do it. You end up having to stop and keep adjusting. That's because controllers are not 3D yet. They will be, but they're not yet. And we were concerned about that, because it affects the gameplay. We want you to feel like you can kill stuff real easy, and enjoy killing stuff! So when we need to it to be 2D, it'll be 2D, and when not it'll be 3D. For instance, when you're fighting Karn it will be 3D.

GF: Are there multiple paths through each level?

DP: Uh-huh. It's a real 3D engine, it's not 2D. You can go anywhere—you can go under bridges and the camera will follow you through it. We control the camera like

"It's not really that violent a game. It's kind of funny. It's not shooting people... The game itself has been really popular."

WILD 9...

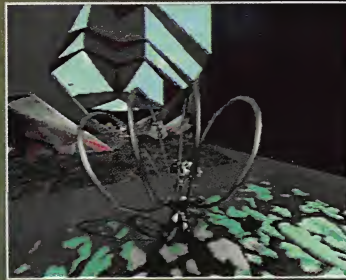
GF: First question. Is it *Wild 9* or *Wild 9's*?

DP: It's *Wild 9* but it's easier to say *Wild 9's*.

GF: How long has it been in development now?

DP: We've been doing it now for about a year. Conceptually a lot of time went into

Wex Major, and he's like this action hero with a bitchin' weapon called the Rig. The Rig is controlled by a glove that he wears on one hand, and depending on the position of his hand, he can make the rig do different things. It can be a weapon, or



a director. That was another issue with a lot of games: Camera control is very hard to handle. You know the way in *Mario 64* the camera sometimes won't let you select the view you want, or in *Tomb Raider* when it gets stuck in a wall. It's a very hard thing to solve. The game that I laughed at was *Die Hard Trilogy* on the PS. They couldn't get the camera in the room with you so they just make the walls go invisible!

GF: Yeah, but it worked.
DP: It was a good solution. Our solution is simply to make sure nothing like that happens. We direct the game. You don't have to be a cameraman as well.

GF: You said that the control will vary from 2D to 3D. Apart from the 2D platform sections, what other types of gameplay do you have in mind?

DP: You can ride on a Hover Bike as well.

GF: How does the Rig work?

DP: At the minute it's pretty straightforward. You pick up weapons and you use them. Some of the weapons are funny. We have a bowling beam that inflates enemies when you shoot them, and you can grab the guy and roll him like a bowling ball to knock everyone else out of the way. The rig varies depending on what power-up you pick up.

GF: What other kinds of power-ups are there?

DP: We have different kinds of shots. There's one where you shoot people with a missile and it drills into them and knocks them down to the floor; and they'll be twitching and screaming; then it will count down and blow them up! In '97, the idea of enemies disappearing in a puff of smoke when you kill them is over. Also the idea of jumping on things with your bottom is over.

GF: How large are you going to make Wild 9? How many levels?

DP: I don't think it's going to be huge. It's probably only going to be around 10 levels. The problem is not the size, it's the time needed to focus on the specific bits of each level. I actually will be pushing them NOT to add too much stuff.

GF: You said that Wild 9 will be the most animated game ever. Give us an example.

DP: The basic idea was to make the world look alive. We're going to have everything moving. We have things moving so subtly—sometimes less than a pixel—that you have to anti-alias it to get it to appear. And Wex, the main character, will never stop moving. He'll be sitting there blinking, moving—the guy will just never freeze. Also if you jump off something and floor is hard, you'll get a better jump than if the floor is soft, or breaking away. We'll have animations for absolutely everything.

GF: Your character reacts to the floor he's on?

DP: Say you jump and the floor falls away, Wex will go 'Whooooah!'—you'll get one of those jumps—as opposed to the usual

'boing, boing, boing' jump of most games. We haven't added those animations yet, but we will. Also you will be able to pick up a lot of background objects and pile them on top of each other. There's a lot of physics in there; stuff we always wanted to do with the Genesis but could never do.

SEGA HIATUS...

GF: So Wild 9 is for both Saturn and PS?

DP: Actually we've, er... postponed the Saturn version. Until Sega does something that inspires us you're not going to be seeing that.

GF: But everything we've seen of the game so far has been Saturn!

DP: Yeah, that's true. It's all up and running. We have a very, very fast Saturn engine. It actually has more effects than the PS version. But to continue to work on the Saturn version at this point just doesn't make any sense.

GF: This is Sega's worst nightmare really. Losing 3rd party support like you?

DP: To see people leaving them must be breaking their heart.

GF: But especially Shiny. You guys have always supported Sega.

DP: It's very sad.

Recently there's been a lot of com-

"The main character is a guy named Wex Major, and he's like this action hero with a bitchin' weapon called the Rig."



panies not working on Saturn, and we have.

I've invested a lot of money and time into making sure we do Saturn stuff. But until I see some positive action from Sega... I mean, as of today they still haven't even dropped their price. And matching is not going to do it. They're going to have to go below PS and N64, and I don't think they're going to do that. They need to go to \$129 or \$99.

GF: You think \$99 would do it?

DP: I call it the Nag Factor. The Nag Factor for a kid to his parents is about 150 bucks. If they nag them forever they'll get a 150 dollars out of them. But they're not going to get 250 or 500. You know, the 3DO concept: 700 dollars! They just can't nag that hard. They'd have to pull a knife on their parents to do it.

EXPANSION INTO PC...

DP: Something I want to tell you, which I'd like you to keep under your hats, is that we're in the process of hiring the *Tomb Raider* team to come and join Shiny. Which is going to cause a real stir.

(Ed. note: They have not accepted the offer as of today, 3/26/97—Knightmare)

GF: You're kidding! How did that happen?

DP: Well I can't really tell you... Ok, I will. Basically they came to us with a great idea for a game and we're going to let them do it.

GF: What system?

DP: PC. Actually, I'm going to show you something in a minute, if the guys are available. We have a new technology that we're going to be demonstrating at E3. I'll give you the first look at it. Nobody's seen it.

FIGHTING FORCE



The following could have been a simple preview of an exceptional game, but it is within my power to turn out the details. And a game as potentially shocking as Core's *Fighting Force* deserves only the best. Every single scrap of info I could muster is now yours...

THE STORY Four individuals, from all corners of society, have come together to face the sinister Dr. Zeng. Mace Daniels, private investigator, happened upon the Doctor's evil schemes while working on a bizarre kidnapping case. As she investigated the abduction of the theoretical scientist, she discovered many cases of theft at top secret research laboratories worldwide. Simultaneously, the new drug Biothene (a "wonder drug" introduced 5 months earlier) was beginning to show signs of horrible side effects. Makes you feel like a million bucks, like you could take on the world, then slams you down so low you feel like a mindless zombie. Mace believes Dr. Zeng is somehow orchestrating the whole thing. She contacts her friend Dr. Blair, hoping to gain new information, but discovers he was gunned down while trying to foil a robbery of experimental research. Blair's assistant, Alana McKendrick, saw him as a father. She snaps, demanding revenge, and joins Mace in her cause. The stolen research involved Myathene, a powerful energy source that can be added to Biothene to enhance its effects a thousand-fold. The potential for catastrophe is undeniable. Mace decides to search for the killers, and calls on her friend Hawk Manson for help. The vigilante street fighter jumps at the opportunity to fight. Dan Rage, her long time friend and expert fighter, is unable to help, but he offers another option: A prisoner, Ben Jackson (a.k.a. Smasher) would be ideal for the job... If he helps, he goes free. Given these options, he agrees. Mace has her four-man team, and they hit the streets...



As you can tell by the shots, the preview *FF* has only one of four characters: Hawk. At this point, very few of his special moves, combos, and throws are available. Above, from left to right, we have his head butt, slam, and the only special move, the 360° Spin. A whopping 40-50 moves per character are planned, including complex combos, chain hits within grabs (*Tekken 2*-style), and special weapon-based attacks (check out the cool rocket launcher, right).



DEVELOPER - CORE
PUBLISHER - EIDOS
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - TOUGH
AVAILABLE - 3RD QTR. '97



GLITCH
HardCORE 3D
Beat-'Em-Up
Power!



Alana



THE GAME STRUCTURE One of the most intriguing elements of *Fighting Force* is its level design. The game is structured in two distinct ways: full 3D and semi 3D. Let's start off with a full 3D level, such as Level 1 (check-out the shots for a reference). You start on the street, near the parking lot beneath Dr. Zeng's HQ. This is a real street, by the way. There are trees, street lights, trash cans that can be destroyed, and a two-way street—busy with polygonal traffic of all sorts (like taxis, buses, etc.). Quite impressive. Anyway, because this environment is in full 3D, feel free to move absolutely *anywhere*. Play in traffic, trash some parked cars, anything goes in a real time 3D beat-'em-up world. You can lure the 'black suits' (the designated punks of the level) into traffic, maybe toss them under a passing yellow cab for kicks, just because you can. It's all indescribably cool, 'cause I've never been able to do this before. And best of all, with polygonal characters, objects, vehicles, and

a giant environment, 24 fps keeps on flowing. The most ambitious upcoming full 3D level being planned is the Bronx. Here you enter the Bronx at night, via a massive bridge loaded with wrecked cars, debris, and a host of bloodthirsty thrill-killing gang members. All in glorious go-anywhere 3D... I can't wait!!!



Hawk

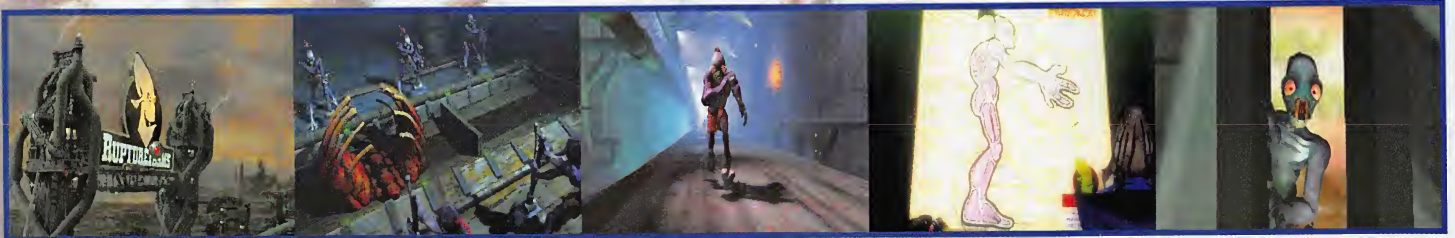
Well, I guess the semi 3D levels sound pretty boring at this point, but believe it or not, the constraints are far less restrictive than one might think. First off, this isn't semi 3D in the vein of, let's say, *Die Hard Arcade*. *DHA* has isolated environments, almost like the arenas of a 3D fighting game, with linear movement from screen to screen. In *Fighting Force*, even the semi 3D levels offer hidden secrets, multiple paths, and a scrolling environment. The most extreme example of semi 3D is the elevator stage, on the way up to Dr. Zeng's HQ. The elevator itself looks awesome—we're talking fully transparent windows and a gorgeous scrolling building racing by in the background. Niiice. The ride stops every couple of floors, bad guys flood the elevator, and you move on. Within this cramped environment,

however, you can still have some fun. Bust up the railings and use them to smash your opponents, or break open glass cases and start chopping away with an axe, it's all up to you. This is the most linear level in the game, granted, but there's still loads to do. Thankfully, it seems as though the semi 3D levels are designed to take full advantage of the limited movement, such as boss levels, where it simply wouldn't make sense to have a giant environment.

Until our next preview copy shows up, I have precious little more to report. In our current rev there's no music, no bosses, and most of the collision isn't in yet, but I hope the level structure details answered a few questions. I am all over *Fighting Force*. The next version I see, you'll see. 'Til then, enjoy the shots. **G**



Dr. Zeng



Everyone seems to malign the PlayStation's 2D capabilities, but in the past few months we've seen some extremely impressive 2D graphics coming out of Sony's gray box. The Adventures of Lomax in Lemmingsland, Castlevania X and now Abe's Oddysee all prove that, in the right hands, the PS is a machine capable of producing some quite spectacular 2D visuals. And none more spectacular than Abe's Oddysee.

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, there lived a creature named Abe. Abe was a Mudokon, one of a number of slaves working for a meat factory called Rupture Farms on the planet Oddworld. One day while going about his daily chores, Abe discovered that the next species due for mass slaughter in the factory was none other than his native race—the Mudokon. Now it's up to you to help Abe escape Rupture Farms and rescue his friends before they get turned into Mudokon burgers!

At its core, Abe's Oddysee is a flip-screen 2D action/platform/puzzle game in the style of Out of This World or Flashback. Abe controls like a standard 2D platform character, but with the ability to run, creep, roll, grab ledges, interact with certain items in the

background, utilize special psychic powers and even talk! Yes talk!

As you wander around Rupture Farms (and later Oddworld) you will encounter other imprisoned Mudokon slaves in need of your help. In order to free a fellow slave you need first to talk to them (to get their trust), then lead them to one of the many circles of birds which act as a magical portal to freedom.

By holding down L1 or L2 and pressing any button Abe can access a number of commands or sounds that are used to communicate with other creatures in the game.

For instance, Abe can ask a fellow Mudokon to follow him, or fart to distract the attention of an alien guard. This innovative feature is called Game Speak, and you can expect to see it developed a lot further as the game gets closer to completion.

Of course, escaping Rupture Farm is not going to be as easy as just walking out the front door. There are numerous traps and puzzles to negotiate, not to mention hordes of sadistic machine-gun totting alien guards to overcome. But Abe is armed with a powerful weapon—his mind. By holding down L1 and R1, Abe can build up a charge of psychic energy which allows him to telepathically take control of the nearest guard. While the guard is possessed by Abe, you can use his gun to dispatch

ODDWORLD ABE'S ODDYSEE



DEVELOPER - ODD WORLD

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



KNIGHTMARE

Odd doesn't even begin to cover it...



other enemies, or simply cause it to explode in a shower of body parts! Abe can also use certain objects in the environment to combat guards, such as switch-operated trapdoors and giant grinders.

As I mentioned at the start of this review, Abe is one good-looking game. The backgrounds may not scroll, but they are drawn, while the quality of animation is unprecedented (not at the expense of the control, either). The CG cut scenes are seamlessly blended into the action, *FFVII* style, generating a real feeling of immersion. You'll swear you're playing a cartoon. The sound is also top notch, with atmospheric environmental music and an awesomely realistic effect for the alien guard's machine-gun.

Abe's Oddysee positively oozes high production values, and for once it's possible to see that the money hasn't been squandered. I remember laughing at the PR video a few months back when it told me that the game would work because players would care about Abe. But do you know what? They're right. You gotta love the stupid lug. Abe's Oddysee isn't due until September, but rest assured we'll be bringing you updates as the game develops. This one's going to be big! **K**





Coming from obscure developers Telstar/Tempest, *Excalibur 2555AD* is one of the most unique 3D games ever, striking the middle ground of action, puzzle, and adventure with absolute accuracy.

EXCALIBUR

2555AD

The Story

Far into the future, an amateur astronomer spots a meteor streaking dangerously close to earth. Scientists quickly evaluate the situation, determining that the meteor will collide with earth in a mere 18 months. A world-scale evacuation ensues in an attempt to avert human extinction. Millions are shipped away from the projected impact site, but this is still not enough. Enormous shock waves will travel across the surface, crushing all life in their wake. And so a massive operation begins, and hundreds of shafts are dug deep into the earth. Countless tunnels reaching out for hundreds of miles follow, and small subterranean cities soon form. Hundreds of millions are abandoned, however, left behind to face the impact in their makeshift shelters... Needless to say, they don't make it.

450 years later (the underground tunnel concept was apparently a blazing success!), the largest of the subterranean city-scapes, Salto, is home to millions. Salto has its problems, however. The technologically advanced Elysians, a high society group (to say the least), have arrogantly swayed towards tyranny. After discovering time travel, the Elysians' power-crazed leader, Delavar, dispatches troops into the past. Their destination: Camelot, home of Excalibur. The portal opens, Arthur's castle is stormed by laser fire, and the troops escape through the portal with the sword. Merlin, famed mage of Camelot, is furious. He concocts a spell to open a time portal close to the sword, and sends Beth, his niece (and reluctant volunteer) through the shimmering hole, her trusty sword in hand. For the King of England, his subjects, and to save the future, her frantic search begins...



"EXCALIBUR 2555AD IS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE 3D GAMES EVER!"

That's a pretty imaginative plot huh? Get into the game and the complexity continues. First up, you'll be able to appreciate the fine 3D engine. Consistent 24-30fps, gorgeous light-sourcing splayed about the screen, and excellent textures (the gothic art style rules). It's not a *Doom* or *Turok* engine (heavily fight-based), nor does it involve *Tomb Raider's* platforms and open areas. Precedence points to *Overblood*, believe it or not, with a focus on back-and-forth exploration and slow, calculated battles. You're dealing with two distinct camera angles: the scaled-away perspective (pointless, but pretty), and first-person, the only useful camera. I mostly fiddle with the cameras to show people how hideous Beth looks up close (give her black eyes, and presto! She's an alien!). So that's how it looks—now, on to how it plays.

Beth's D-pad movement is just like *Resident Evil*,



or any number of games in this genre. Only **X**, **■**, and **●** are used when exploring, to examine, run, and use item (respectively). Pressing R1 or R2, at anytime, will change her into a fighting stance. Once you're battle-ready, **X** blocks, while **■** swipes left, **▲** is your overhead, and **●** slashes right. If you're familiar with the PS pad, you'll see that this configuration makes perfect sense. The fighting's slow, with lots of timed blocks, and strikes must be executed precisely against faster foes. In due time, the



BATTLES ARE NOT WON WITH SPEED. STRATEGY WILL YIELD A VICTORY!



slow pace of battles actually gets exciting, once you appreciate the skill involved in timing blows (wait 'til you're surrounded by three wailing Skeletons, heh, that's PAIN). The exploration element is equally cool. There's 13 huge levels to search, in countless environments, with dozens of



sub-quests. You're mostly doing stuff for the locals. These people have problems, nay, *issues*, perpetually popping up, always requiring your help. Solving one such quandary inevitably leads to the next, as dilemmas seem to breed in spades and stay connected. In the first few levels, the mini-quests are pretty simple, and enemies can be easily defeated (beware of Death Crypt though...you will fear the Reaper!). Later on, puzzles are perfectly enjoyable *nightmares*, and big, BAD enemies, like Giant Spiders, Zombies, and other such cuties, will attempt to cramp your style permanently.

Well, I'm done here. Trust me on this one, *Excalibur 2555AD* is a really, really cool game. You'll easily be swept into the quest, and beating it takes many dedicated sessions. The atmosphere, the pace, the environments, the ambient music, the adventure (deep breath)—well done, Telstar and Tempest, keep it up. G



R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - TEMPEST

PUBLISHER - TELSTAR

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - HARD

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



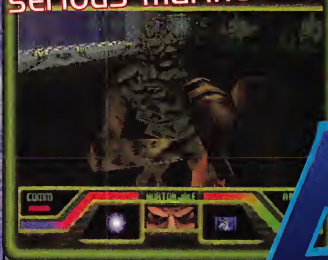
GLITCH
Big games come from small people!

KONAMI'S FIRST FORAY INTO THE WORLD OF CORRIDOR SHOOTERS IS A REAL TIME 3D ACTION/ADVENTURE WITH A STORY!



Take control of bomb-disposal expert Jake Burton and kick some serious marine ass!

Insult your enemies with dozens of amusing Bruce Campbell quips. Feel the Power!



BROKEN HELIX

Greetings, fellow game lovers, and welcome to the latest installment in GameFan's ongoing *Broken Helix* coverage. Since our March preview, the game has come along even further (it's now 85% complete), and the mosaic of gameplay and story elements is finally starting to take shape. Konami's vision of an interactive movie/adventure/first-person shooter is nearing completion, and if this version is anything to go by, the end result is going to be something pretty gosh darn special indeed.

In this beta, all sixteen levels and four story lines (with five endings) are working, while the level design and gameplay have received a number of major enhancements. Jake Burton (the central protagonist), has had several new moves and attacks added to his repertoire, including a somersault jump, a dive into a crawl, an infra-red sight for

his plasma rifle and the ability to smack enemies upside the head with the butt of his gun. The quality of his animation has been improved, and Konami assures us that they will add even more incidental animations (hand gestures, head scratching, etc) before the final version ships.

The levels themselves have also been refined, with the placement of more enemies (including giant spiders, warbots, evil scientists and rolling limbs!) and the addition of numerous puzzle and platform sections. One area sees Jake confronted by a mysterious gas seeping through the level, the contents of which are fatal to all living creatures. In order to survive, Jake must locate and utilize a remote control robot to retrieve an antidote from inside the infected area before the gas can reach him. *Broken Helix* is full of such little innovations.



The brand of DNA has resulted in an unusual case. I'm afraid for they can't be used. By using Jack Burton's journal, Bruce has come up with a formula for a cure that ends the mission. The formula will take several months to perfect, so he will have to focus on the next mission. Early attempts with the program's abilities have been successful, so this should be a good start.

ENTER FILENAME
BROKEN HELIX



Let there be no doubt about Konami's skills. Stateside or abroad, their games rock!

Currently, the game engine is running very smoothly, with fully 3D texture mapped environments and characters all moving at 30 fps. The models may not be that detailed, but the environments are atmospheric and the engine allows for some impressive lighting effects. The music and FX are also first rate, while the voice (and script) is simply a work of genius. I think I'll save my comments on this aspect for the review next month, but Bruce Campbell fans can rest assured that they're in for a real treat.

Other features new to this burn include a working map (which shows the position of enemies and allies), more cinematic cut scenes (check out Jake's various death scenes), even more speech and improved NPC character AI. You can change Jake's mood from neutral to hostile and all of the NPC characters in the game react differently depending on how you treat them. Insult the wrong person and the you could find yourself in serious trouble!

The four different storylines are entirely determined by your actions and a couple of them take some pretty unexpected twists (think *Blade Runner: Director's Cut*).

THERE'S ONLY ONE BRUCE CAMPBELL, AND HE'S IN BROKEN HELIX!

For instance, at one point you meet a reporter who's snuck into Area 51 to do a story on the terrorist who's threatening to blow the place up. Do you escort her to the terrorist (thus making your life much more difficult), do you leave her to Black Dawn and his troops, or do you simply insult her then blow her away? It's your choice, and there's no right or wrong way of doing things.

Konami has a long list of 'things to do' for the final version of *Broken Helix*, so it would be premature to levy any real criticism at this point. To be honest, the only problem I had was that the collision detection on the platform sections seemed a bit awkward, but I'm sure that will get fixed. Regardless, *Broken Helix* is shaping up to be something very special indeed, and if everything goes according to plan it could end up doing for Konami what *Resident Evil* did for Capcom. K

Get ready for even more Broken Helix madness next month!



P
PREVIEW

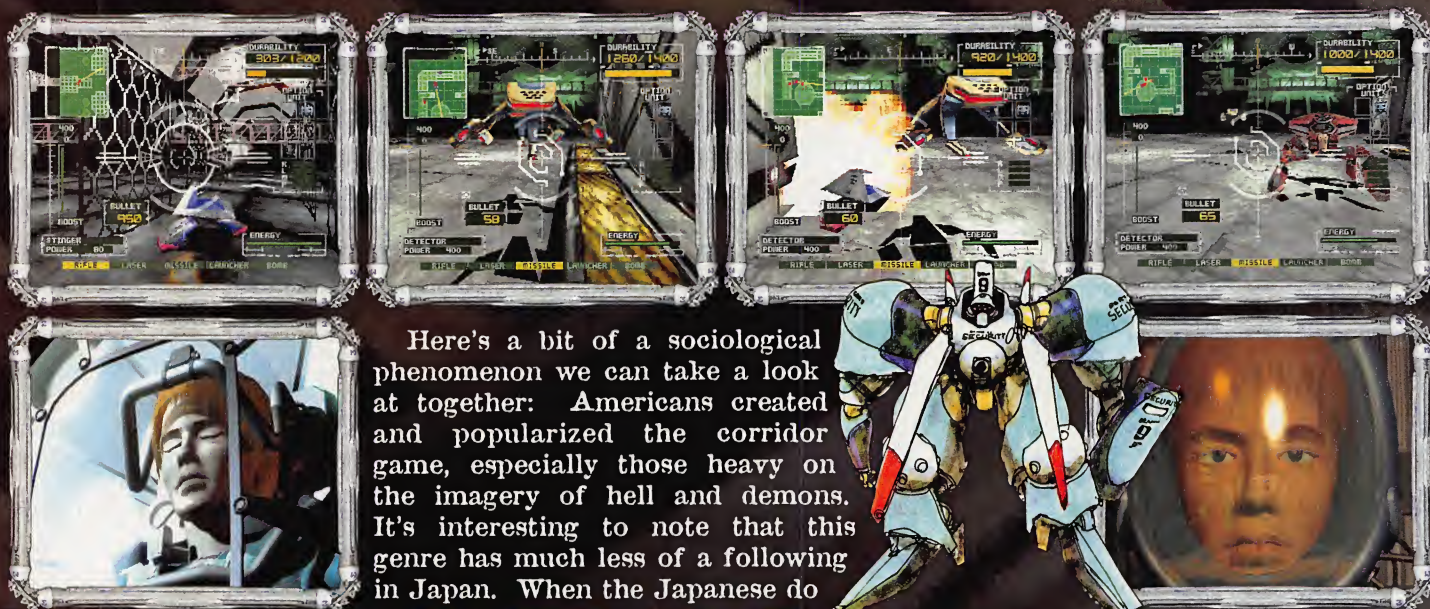


DEVELOPER - KONAMI
PUBLISHER - KONAMI
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - JUNE



KNIGHTMARE
Good, bad, I'm the guy with the plasma rifle.



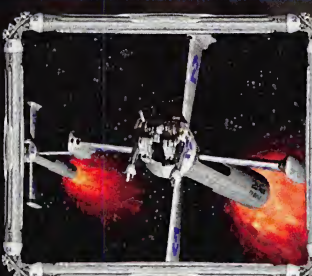
Here's a bit of a sociological phenomenon we can take a look at together: Americans created and popularized the corridor game, especially those heavy on the imagery of hell and demons. It's interesting to note that this genre has much less of a following in Japan. When the Japanese do

BRAHMA FORCE

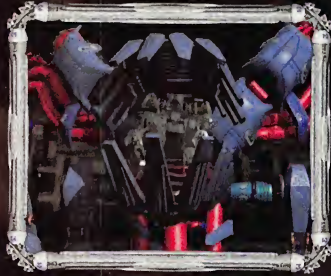
The Assault on Beltlogger 9



make a corridor game, they usually replace flesh with metal, making a robot themed game. Witness Daedalus (Robotica, also Genki), Kileak 1 & 2, and the game you see before you, Brahma Force: The Assault on Beltlogger 9.



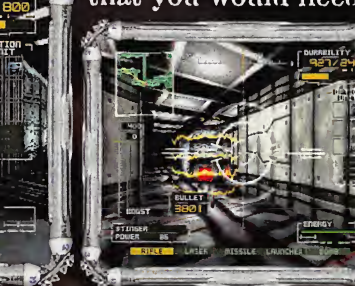
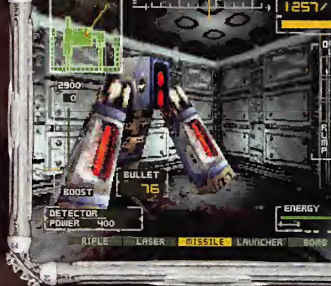
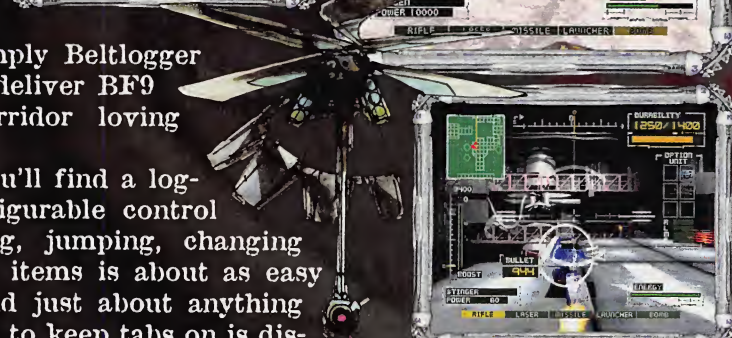
Released in Japan as simply Beltlogger 9, Jaleco has seen fit to deliver BF9 stateside to all the corridor loving yanks.



As the game begins, you'll find a logical and completely configurable control layout. Strafing, looking, jumping, changing weapons, and using items is about as easy as it could be. And just about anything that you would need to keep tabs on is displayed on your HUD, though this leads to a somewhat busy and cluttered view of the outside world.



The polygonal graphics are clean and nicely detailed. It's a pretty solid and well designed



DEVELOPER - GENKI

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - JALECO USA

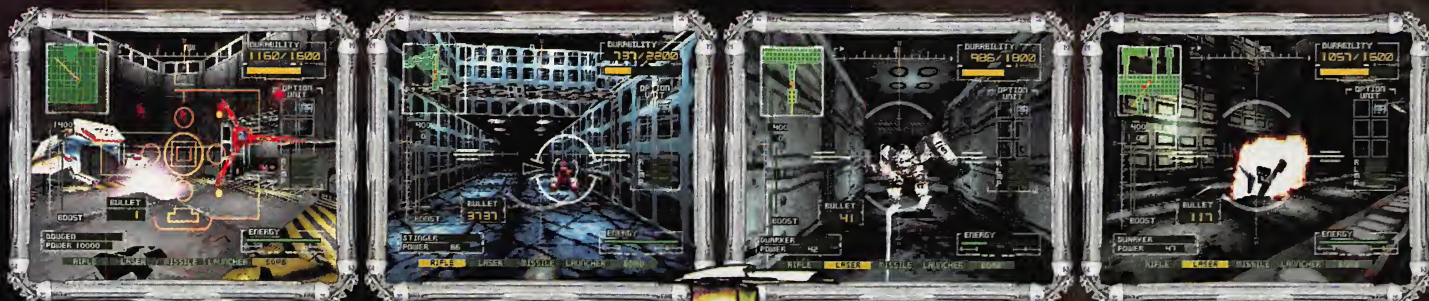
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - MARCH



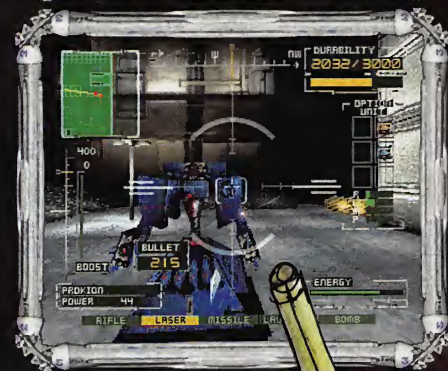
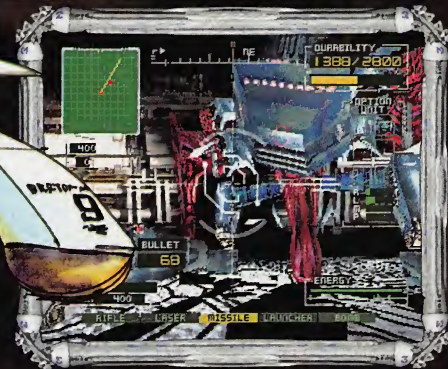
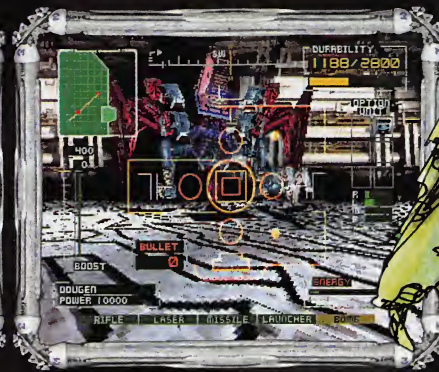
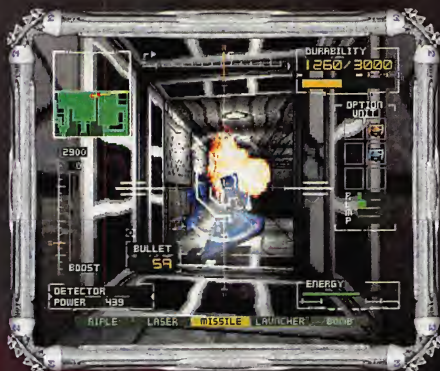
SUBSTANCE D
Hey, man, don't be a beltlogger.



world, with only the smallest trace of texture warping and minor pixellization up close. The enemies are 3D polygonal models with effective (if predictable) designs. It's worth noting that Jaleco has ramped up the enemy AI to make the American version a little more challenging. Also, they've taken some larger enemies from later levels and transplanted them into earlier ones.

The levels themselves are well laid out with a lot of really cool vertical elements. As for what you're doing in each level, it's what you've come to expect: find keys and items, flip switches, and blow stuff up. Here, all these familiar elements are done well enough to make the game enjoyable. Due to the mechanical nature of the game however, it lacks diversity in look and feel from area to area, though there are some fantastic boss encounters and an abundance of levels (22).

With a bigger helping of new ideas, Brahma Force could have risen above the level of a somewhat cliché, yet very well produced corridor game. If the catharsis of destroying living things in a video game does not rank high on your corridor wish list and you appreciate the futuristic mech aesthetic, Brahma Force will definitely fulfill your wishes. **SD**



FYI-The Japanese original was available in a limited box set which included a book of gorgeous renders, art, and bits from the developers like the transformation above.

Nail

Entering the fray for PS off-road supremacy, here's Psygnosis' munch-'n-crunch multi-mode 4 wheel extravaganza, Thunder Truck Rally.

This expanding-yet-still-up-for-grabs field includes Hardcore 4x4, Test Drive Off-Road, Rally Cross, Jet Moto, and VMX Racing. Of those, VMX, Jet, and Rally are the standouts. Can Psygnosis provide off-road thrills to the extent they did futuristic ones and capture the prize? Let's have a look, shall we.

The foundation of TTR is built around the premise of speed vs. damage and the equation is a complex one. Where Rally was soft and bouncy with the deterrent of flipping the car, TTR is rock hard with the deterrent of wrecking the car to the extent you cannot proceed, "Ahh, you've totaled your suspension." The complexity comes with the assortment of vehicles. Light and nimble cars are easy to maneuver but take damage readily while heavy cars with murky steering take on less but hike like donkeys. Then of course there's

Miyuki

THUNDER TRUCK Rally

everything in between. Also figuring in is the mid-circuit car crunch. A light car has little chance of winning in the arena so going into the crunch you'll need consistent wins under your belt to proceed to the next level. When you begin TTR this provides frustration as your instincts say catch big air and go as fast as you can, but as you progress you'll come to appreciate the depth and strategic elements within.

Visually, as with all Psygnosis titles, you're privy to lush polygonal environments ranging from baking sand to falling snow, littered with light

Lean

Bear

R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - REFLECTIONS

OF PLAYERS - MULTI

PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - APRIL



E. STORM

They should make a Chia-Truck, don't ya think? Ch-ch-ch-Chia!



Karl

sourcing, lens flares, and flawless vehicle design. In fact the vehicles are so monstrously exaggerated (along with their manga-like pilots) that each possesses vivid personality on and off the track. The measure of pop-up depends on which of the 4 cameras you employ. Of course the further scaled out you are the more clipping, while up close far less is apparent. The important thing is, the quality of the textures are never compromised, and they are richly detailed.



So, you're assured of visual splendor, how 'bout the sound? Well, it's adjustable (fx vs. volume) and is pretty suitable techno/rock racing fare. It's nothing you'd listen to



outside of the game environment, but it fits.

Modes consist of Circuit, Endurance, and Car Crushing in either, Championship, Practice, Multi-Player, or Time Trial play—plenty to do. The Endurance mode features wide open spaces as you merely follow the



Nadia

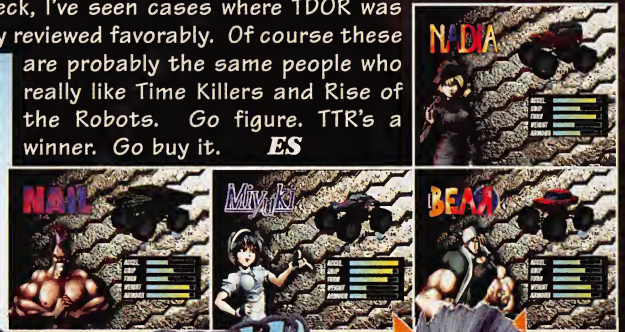
arrow from checkpoint to checkpoint, how you get there is pretty much up to you. The Circuit tracks vary from canyons and wide straights all the way to volcanic razorbacks and huge drop-offs; an impressive and vast assortment of terrain is at hand. Psygnosis has thought of everything including some hot art for each driver, an element sorely overlooked in many a racer. I like developing relationships with characters, not steel.



In the end, I'd call TTR a well rounded, totally worthy addition to your PS off-road collection. I like it better than Rally Cross, but not quite as much as Jet and VMX. Of course racing games are becoming as much a matter of taste as fighters. Heck, I've seen cases where TDOR was actually reviewed favorably. Of course these are probably the same people who really like Time Killers and Rise of the Robots. Go figure. TTR's a winner. Go buy it. **ES**



Enzo



Aaron

THE BATTLE ENTERS A NEW DIMENSION.

IT'S ODD WHAT STRANGE LITTLE MEMORIES ARE FOREVER BOUNCING AROUND YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS. FOR ME, ONE OF THOSE MEMORIES IS THE FIRST TIME I EVER PLAYED *XEVIIOUS* AND NOTICED THAT DEBRIS WAS LEFT ON THE GROUND AFTER SOMETHING WAS BLOWN UP. FOR SOME REASON, THAT IMPRESSED ME SO MUCH IN 1982 THAT I REMEMBER IT TO THIS DAY. PERHAPS I'M INSANE?

ANYHOW, BECAUSE OF THIS IMPRINT, I WAS UNDERSTANDABLY CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT NAMCO HAD IN STORE FOR US WITH THEIR SHINY NEW 3D UPDATE OF *XEVIIOUS*.

TO BEGIN WITH, NAMCO HAS INCLUDED (IN ADDITION TO THE 3D/G+) THE CLASSIC *XEVIIOUS* ALONG WITH *SUPER XEVIIOUS* AND *XEVIIOUS ARRANGEMENT*. SURELY A *XEVIIOUS*

XEVIIOUS 3D/G+

EVERY VERSION
OF XEVIIOUS!

FANATIC'S DREAM COME TRUE, AND ANOTHER GALLERY IN NAMCO'S GROWING "MUSEUM" COLLECTION. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS NOSTALGIA THING HAS GROWN TO THE PROPORTIONS THAT IT HAS? OLD GAMES REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT PART OF CHILDHOOD TO A LOT OF PLAYERS, AND I SUPPOSE PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS TRY TO RECAPTURE THAT FEELING OF BLISSFUL YOUTH. SO, TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR REGRESSION THERAPY,



NAMCO GIVES YOU AN ARCADE PERFECT 1982 *XEVIIOUS*.

BUT OBVIOUSLY THE REAL CURIOSITY IS OVER *XEVIIOUS 3D/G+*. IN ESSENCE, NAMCO HAS GENTLY EXTRUDED THE 2D CLASSIC AND GIVEN US AN ALL NEW 3D

FOUR CLASSIC GAMES ON ONE CD INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL ARCADE HIT



VERSION. ALL THE FAMILIAR ELEMENTS ARE HERE—THE GROUND TARGETS, THE ROTATING MONOLITHS, ETC. THE GRAPHICS HAVE BEEN KEPT SIMPLE, UTILIZING ONLY A FAIR AMOUNT OF FLAT SHADED POLYGONS. IT'S AN UNDERSTATED LOOK TO BE SURE, BUT EASY ON THE EYES. IN FACT, IT'S AS IF

NAMCO DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE THIS GAME THE VISUAL FEAST THAT IS SOMETHING LIKE *RAYSTORM*. WE ALL KNOW NAMCO HAS THE 3D TALENT. SO INSTEAD OF ABANDONING THE GAME'S ORIGINS, WHAT THEY DID WAS MAKE SOME-

XEVIIOUS 3D/G+ COMPLETE WITH THE STANDARD HARDCORE CG CUT SCENES!





PERFECT
CONVERSION
OF THE
SYSTEM II
ARCADE HIT!

THING WHICH, TO ME, FEELS LIKE A *XEVIOUS GAIDEN*—A TRUE EXTENSION OF THE ORIGINAL GAME, NOT A COMPLETELY NEW TAKE. I'D HAVE TO SAY I KIND OF LIKE ITS NEO-RETRO TRAPPINGS.

AS FOR THE GAME PLAY, ASIDE FROM TWO NEW WEAPONS (A LOCK-ON, AND A LASER), IT PLAYS JUST LIKE CLASSIC X. YOU DROP BOMBS AT A FIXED DISTANCE FROM YOUR SHIP AND

BLAST AIRBORNE ENEMIES. THERE ARE NO SUPER BOMBS TO SPEAK OF (OR WHATEVER YOUR LINGO IS FOR, UM, SUPER BOMBS), WHICH IS IN KEEPING WITH THE ESSENCE OF X. AND TO THROW SOME MORE NOSTALGIA YOUR WAY, NAMCO HAS KEPT THE SOUND EFFECTS FITTINGLY '82. YOUR SHOTS MAKE THE CLASSIC LITTLE *XEVIOUS* BLEEPING NOISES, I POSIT TO TRICK YOU INTO REMEMBERING THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

AS FOR THE CLASSIC 2D VERSIONS BUNDLED ON THE DISC, THE ORIGINAL *XEVIOUS* SHOULD BE FAMILIAR TO ALL. HOWEVER, TO INCREASE THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THIS SET AND TO PROVIDE SOME NOVELTY FACTOR FOR X FANS, *SUPER XEVIOUS* AND *XEVIOUS ARRANGEMENT* MAKE THE GRADE (SEE RIGHT). THESE GAMES NEVER APPEARED IN ARCADES AND WERE CONSOLE-ONLY CURIOSITIES. *XEVIOUS ARRANGEMENT* IS PRACTICALLY IDENTICAL TO THE ORIGINAL WITH SLIGHT GRAPHICAL ENHANCEMENTS WHILE *SUPER XEVIOUS* OFFERS TWO-PLAYER ACTION AND BOASTS NEW SCENERY AND ENEMIES.

THOSE OF YOU OUT THERE WHO COUNT YOURSELVES AS TRUE *XEVIOUS* FIENDS WILL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT NAMCO PLANS ON RELEASING *XEVIOUS 3D/G+* STATESIDE. SO IF YOU'RE THE RIGHT AGE, THIS COLLECTION SHOULD HAVE YOU GLIDING SOFTLY INTO THE PAST, TO A TIME WHEN

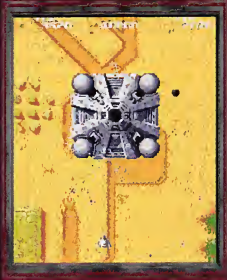
XEVIOUS WAS STATE OF THE ART AND JELLY BEANS WERE COOL. **SD**



ORIGINAL
XEVIOUS



XEVIOUS
ARRANGEMENT



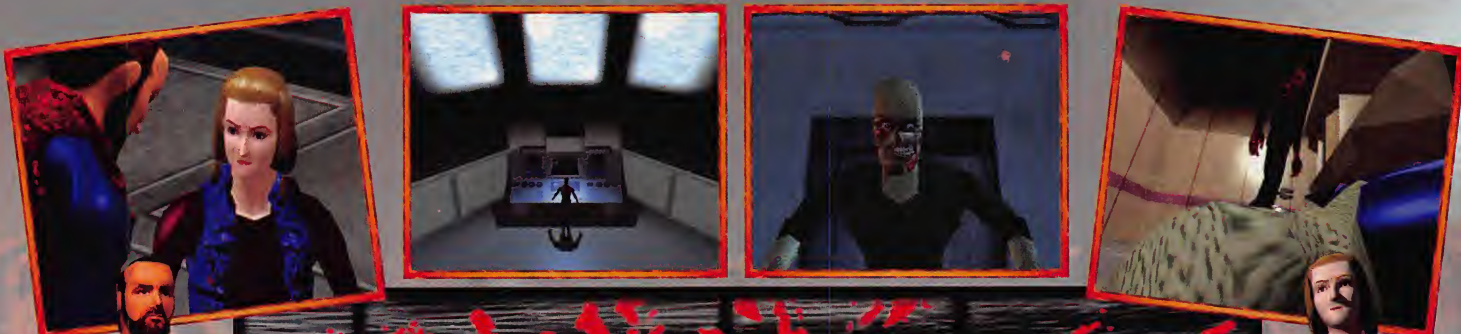
SUPER
XEVIOUS



DEVELOPER - NAMCO	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - NAMCO	DIFFICULTY - EASY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - JUNE



SUBSTANCE D
More *Xevious* than you can shake a stick at!



OverBlood

True to my word, here's the complete review of EA's Overblood. It's fully translated and ready for the shelves, so I'll give you the straight facts before you decide to spend any of that hard-earned dough. Originally developed in Japan by Riverhillsoft, Overblood keeps company with games like Resident Evil, Perfect Weapon, and most recently Excalibur, in the immensely popular 3D action-adventure genre.

If there's one popular trend in this genre, it's the creative liberty taken by the developers when forming a plot. Overblood is no different. The main character, Raz, has just woken up from a cryogenic sleep. As the transparent dome of his deep-freeze coffin raises, Raz wakes-up to a strange futuristic world. He doesn't know how long he has slept, or why, but the story begins to quickly unfold around him. Raz enters this new environment (a research facility of sorts), lost and confused, but his quest for answers begins. He discovers that his cryo-sleep was meant to be eternal, that he was never supposed to escape his icy sentence. Cryogenic technology is only one small component of the experimentation being conducted in the complex, as Raz soon discovers...



I have so many opinions of Overblood! First up, I'm not even too sure that I like it. The control, I complained early on, can be fiendishly aggravating. But now, the deeper I get into the game, I realize it's horrible collision that keeps me frus-



At this point in the game, Raz and Milly have narrowly escaped a near fatal encounter with a mutant. While resting in this serene grove, they discover a way to drain the fountain (left), revealing a secret underground passage. On to the dangers of the Sewer...



DEVELOPER - RIVERHILL SOFT

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - EA

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - CD

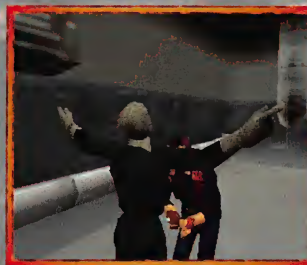
AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
The mutated and twisted offspring of Resident Evil.



Ah... here we have (from L to R) Overblood's peculiar cast of characters. Raz, Milly, the good doctors, and of course, the medically altered duo of Picard and Riker.

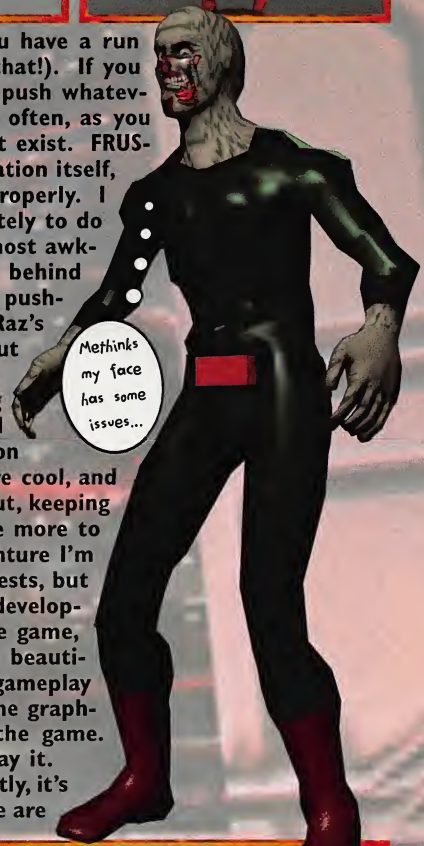


trated. Let me back this up with an example: You have a run button. Press and hold it, and you run (imagine that!). If you are facing something and run, Raz will attempt to push whatever's in the way. Sadly, Raz tries to push way too often, as you collide with stuff (i.e., thin air) that simply doesn't exist. **FRUS-**

TRATION. Most of the control problems involve the character animation itself, which is so stiff and so slow it's no surprise Raz doesn't handle properly. I hate waiting for my character to animate while I'm trying desperately to do something else. More pain? The camera swings into some of the most awkward views ever, in each of its three perspectives (first person, behind character, and far). So here I am, animating like some robot, stuck pushing thin air, while the camera gives me a perfectly clear view of Raz's backside. Good stuff. I've described a worst case scenario, sure, but the fact is these problems are a recurring nuisance.

Alas, the diligent gamer that I am, Overblood grew on me. I hung in there, learned to compensate for the troublesome controls, and resumed my quest. I discovered that every event is a chain reaction in Overblood, which is good and bad. The objectives themselves are cool, and the story (Raz's search for answers) continues to unravel throughout, keeping up interest. Unfortunately, between these sub-quests, there's little more to do than travel to the next room. In Excalibur (the other 3D adventure I'm playing), you'll always have a good battle to break up the mini-quests, but Overblood offers no such thrills. In fact, it seems as though the developers were a little too concerned with the cinematic elements of the game, and not the play mechanics. Considering the game is packed with beautiful real-time (24 fps+) polygonal environments, you'd think the gameplay would've been given the red carpet treatment as well. It's funny, the graphics are actually so powerful they may add hours of interest to the game. More often than not, I'm more anxious to see a new room than play it.

O.K., you're probably thinking, 'He does not like this game.' Honestly, it's pretty hard not to like this game. The environments and atmosphere are exceptional, the voice acting is decent, and I really like the storyline. Graphically, Overblood is stunning, and the levels, despite their lack of activity, are deep and intricate. I can't recommend this game to everyone, because of the gameplay issues, but fans of the genre may very well enjoy it. G



Now that *Pandemonium* has shown the way (even though *Clockwork Knight* did it first), the 2.5D action/platform genre is in full swing and picking up new recruits every month. Recently we've had *Spider*, *Psychic Curse*, *Wild 9* and now *Lost World* joins the party. Could this be the defining 32-bit genre to rival the dime-a-dozen 2D action/platform titles that flooded the 16-bit market? Time will tell.

In *Lost World* you get to play the part of both humans AND dinosaurs (like *JP* on Genesis) as you jump, shoot, claw and eat your way through over 30 levels of 3D looking, 2D playing action. There are multiple paths that can be taken through each level and each character you control has a different set

of abilities to help you negotiate the terrain. For instance, the hunter has a special grappling hook that lets him swing from ledge to ledge, *Bionic Commando* style, while the T-Rex can simply stomp through most obstacles.

Currently the game is looking beautiful, with awesomely animated dinos and detailed polygon environments. The T-Rex is truly a sight to behold, as he crashes through the hunters' camp, snacking on all who dare cross his path. Once you get a human in your mouth you can even perform combos, like swallowing them, tearing them up or simply spitting them back out!

I never thought I'd say this but *Lost World* is looking hot! The game has one of the most impressive soundtracks I've heard all year, and if DreamWorks can iron out all the glitches by the time the final version ships, then this could end up being a movie license worthy of its source material. We'll keep you posted. **K**



DreamWorks
makes it fun to
be a dinosaur!
(Halitosis notwithstanding!)



DEVELOPER - DREAMWORKS

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - DREAMWORKS

DIFFICULTY - IV/A

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



KNIGHTMARE
I am T-Rex,
hear me roar!

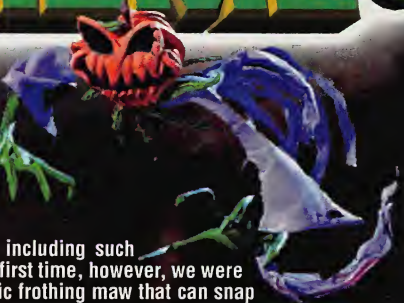


CLAYFIGHTER EXTREME

Here it is: Our first hands-on playtest of *ClayFighter Extreme*! Interplay was kind enough to supply us with an early (very early) playable demo just days before closing the issue, so let's check it out!

This time around the *ClayFighters* wind up plane-wrecked on Klaymodo Isle. The sinister Dr. Klugenheimer, a mad "clayentologist," runs the place. The Clay team discover an evil plan brewing: The crazed Doctor aims to use a vile substance, 'Clayotic Claymorphosis Mutagen,' to turn the whole planet to putty...dough!

A whopping 17 characters were playable in our special preview copy, including such favorites as Blob, Mr. Frosty, and T-Hoppy (of *Judgement Clay* fame). For the first time, however, we were able to try out the new characters. Lockjaw is a crazed pooch with a gigantic frothing maw that can snap at foes from overhead. Houngan, a local Klaymodo witch doctor, smacks you up side the cranium with a ragged chicken or drives a skull-headed scepter deep into the gut. Next we have Sumo Santa; he'll flab you to death with his enormous (but jolly!) belly and swat you sideways with a killer scarf. The Zappa Yow Yow Boys are the coolest of the new ClayFighters. These three psychotic toddlers, stacked-up on each other's shoulders, pound away with insane gravity-defying slaps and ham-



mer strikes. Funny? Oh yeah. And finally we have good 'ole Boogerman and Earthworm Jim. Booger tosses his patented barrage of snot-balls, while Jim lashes his potent whip-like wormness across the face of opponents.

32-bit has allowed for a massive increase in character detail. The clay models look amazing! Get ready for awesome colors, bigger characters, and dramatically improved resolution (miles above the 16-bit versions). The animation has yet to be finalized, but expect the same graphical leap above previous versions. One of the most drastic improvements, obviously, are the cool 3D fight stages. Not only are they smooth and fully polygonal, but you can actually bust through into new areas, *KF*-style, in the midst of a fight. This excellent new feature should add a totally unique twist to fights.

As far as the actual control system goes, a 3D button has been added (cool!) to accommodate the 3D levels. Also, while this version contained no actual special moves or finishers,

most of 'em should be fireballs, dragon punches, and charges, *SF*-style. Basically, we've been assured that bizarre comedic pain is the name of the game, once again, in *ClayFighter* tradition. Anything else? Well, some of the voices are in, like Jim's "Look out below!!!", but everything is still very early (lookin' cool, though). We'll have much more *ClayFighter Extreme* coverage next month! **G**



DEVELOPER - INTERPLAY

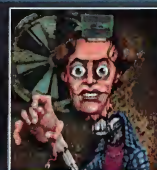
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

DIFFICULTY - N/A

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



GLITCH
Hey, watch the hair, man!

NORSE BY NORSEWEST

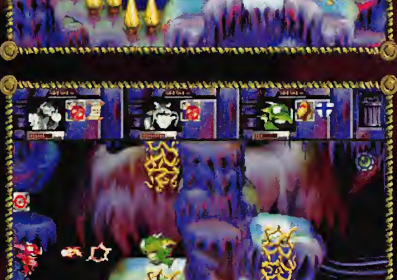
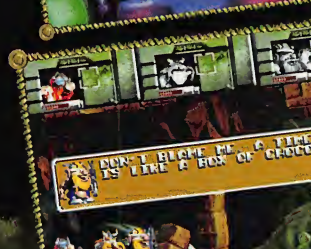
This month Interplay's *Lost Vikings* sequel, *Norse by Norsewest*, has found a new home on the PlayStation. Perhaps you recall my Saturn review last issue? Well, pretty much everything I said then still stands, as this is basically the exact same game. All the levels and level passwords remain unchanged, as does the sound effects and excellent music.

In case you missed my Saturn review or are unfamiliar with *Lost Vikings*, here's a quick run-down of the game's objective: You must use each of the three Vikings' unique abilities to get them all to each level's exit. *Norse by Norsewest* adds two new characters to the mix—the dragon and the wolf—both of whom are available to control on certain levels. It is in these two characters that *NBN* differs the most from its predecessor, which I guess is a way of saying that they really didn't change or enhance the gameplay that much at all. Of course, that's fine if you're looking for more of the same, but personally, I would have preferred a little more innovation, especially in the look and feel of the game.

Those privy to my Saturn review will recall that I wasn't all that thrilled with the

graphics. They were passable, just not inspiring. I didn't like the look of the "claymation" characters, nor did I feel they animated as smoothly as they could have been. But lo and behold, when the PS version was booted up, I'll be damned if the characters didn't look and move just a wee bit better than the Saturn one. Only a wee bit mind you. Also, perhaps I'm being more picky the second time around (which is not necessarily fair to the PS version), but there's only five basic motifs that cover every level. Some added variety in the backgrounds would have been nice.

So let's see now, how can I say what I said about the Saturn version without sounding like a parrot? Polly says that fans of the original *Lost Vikings* should glean some enjoyment from this sequel. If cranium juice floats your gameplay boat, you'll like this. You actually need to think to beat some of the later levels. And if it's a toss-up between SS or PS, I'd have to say go with PS just to get that little extra modicum of character animation. **SD**



DEVELOPER - SILICON & SYNAPSE
PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - MAY '97



SUBSTANCE D
Now they're lost on the PlayStation!



NEED FOR SPEED



Before I say anything about this game, let me qualify it by issuing the following words of compassion: No matter how good or bad a game may be, it took human effort to create. It took time, it took money, and it took a lot of hard work. And I can appreciate that. But I still feel that *Need for Speed II* is somewhat lacking.

I actually enjoyed the original *NFS* on 3DO. Sure it was slow, but I accepted that as the nature of the beast. I also enjoyed the lack of pop-up, the "real" cars, and the analog control. You would assume that a true sequel on the PlayStation would make the 3DO version look like yesterday's news, especially with the current standard of PS development. Well, never assume anything because this game has some serious graphical issues.

First and foremost is *NFS2's* under-powered 3D engine. The frame rate is just unacceptably choppy. Obviously the developers have never been exposed to what Namco can do with a driving engine. The cars themselves, while representing a good eclectic mix of exotics, are poorly textured and don't do their real counterparts any favors. However, what really took my breath away was hitting 200mph and seeing the track come to a complete stand-still! There's one particularly bad stretch in the Australian course where the road texture appears to be stationary while the roadside texture continues to move causing some truly strange sensations of disorientation. How the developers and play testers could look past this glaring graphical flaw is beyond me.

Fortunately, there is some good to be found in this game. The courses themselves are long and varied, and actually well thought out. The game also features a very extensive replay system, which lets you speed up or slow down the action and switch between several camera angles. Basically any accident or cool occurrence within a race can be deconstructed with frame-by-frame precision. Finally, there's some excellent music that plays during the car and course select screen, and numerous hidden "vehicles" to find, such as a log (it's better than bad it's good!) and a newsstand.

It's unfortunate *NFS2's* engine is so poor. The concept of driving exotic cars through varied courses all over the world is a solid one. Where else can you even come close to driving an Isdera Commendatore 112i through winding mountain roads? I feel sorry for the developers who I'm sure wanted this to be a great game, and with a stronger engine it could have been. Maybe next time. *SD*

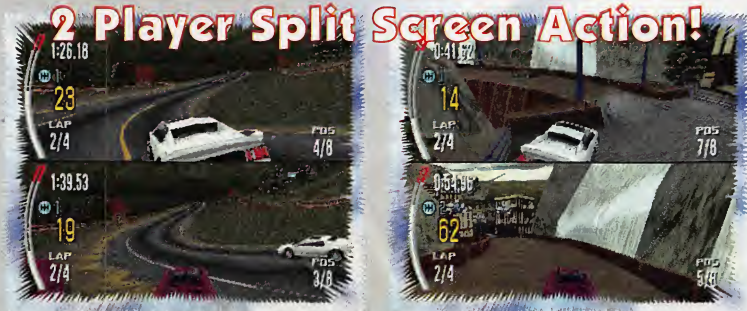
R REVIEW



- DEVELOPER - EA
- PUBLISHER - EA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - EASY
- AVAILABLE - NOW

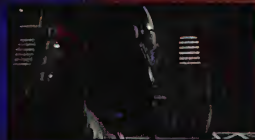


SUBSTANCE D
This game has some issues.



Uhhh, vroom, vroom, heh, heh, heh! Dino-mite!

WING COMMANDER THE PRICE OF FREEDOM



As cross-platform development continues to grow, a host of classic PC titles have finally made the coding ascent to the lucrative home console market. This month the big-budget smash *Wing Commander IV* follows in the footsteps of its predecessor and joins the growing list of PC-to-PS conversions, in all its FMV glory.

Origin's *Wing Commander* series has always been centered around the lush cinematic visuals that the player encounters between missions. From *WC2*'s rich, 'dawn of science fiction' aesthetic to the near-film-quality production of *WC3*, the story elements in *WC* games have always been ambitious. And continuing the trend started in *WC3*, Origin has once again employed some decent acting talent (Mark Hamill, Malcolm McDowell, Tom Wilson) to further enhance the game's cinematic appeal.

The high standard set by the acting is carried over into *WC4*'s other production values. The sets, both digital and real, are impressive, while the quality of the video is above standard. However, it's a good thing the movie segments are as engaging as they are, because the actual simulation part of the game is lackluster in both appearance and execution.

As the story develops you are called upon to fly several types of missions, ranging from straight dogfighting to escorting shuttles through hostile space. The problem with these scenes (and this is true for the PC version as well) is the lack of fluidity and graphical splendor. Still, the space scenes are integral to the story line, making them less of the chore that they might have been on their own. Hell, you may even begin to enjoy them after a time, though mainly through your desire to see the story unfold.

The way I see it, you get a good movie and an merely average game all in one 4-CD pack. The simulation part of the game would never be able to sell on its own (which it should), but if you can live with the balance, and feel like checking out a first rate interactive movie, *Wing Commander IV* may be for you. **SD**



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - ORIGIN/LION

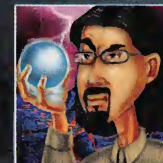
PUBLISHER - ORIGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

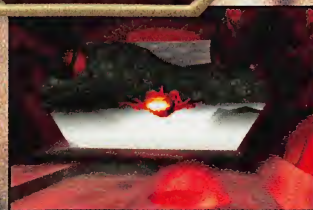
AVAILABLE - JUNE



SUBSTANCE D
Fire at Wing
Commander!!!



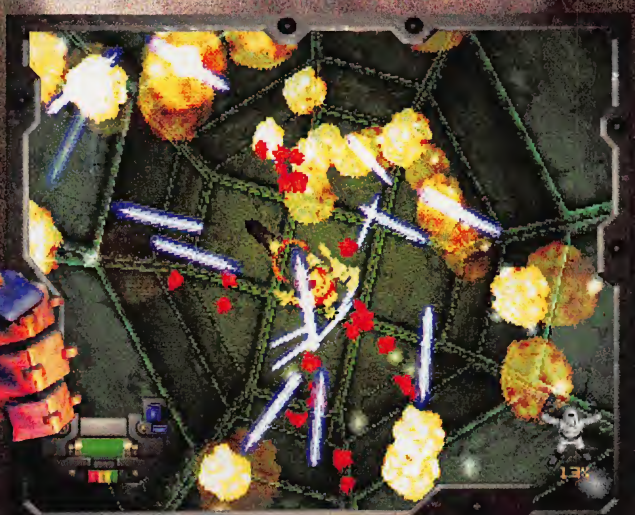
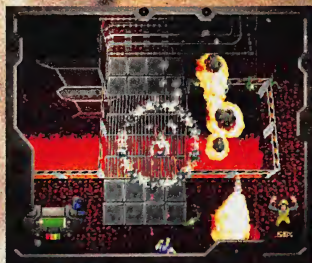
DROID HUNTER



There've been *Mario* clones, *Street Fighter* clones, *Doom* clones, and now there's a *Loaded* clone. If I were Interplay I'd actually be happy to have my game copied; it's not everyday you set the standard for a genre. Anyway, the first *Loaded* clone is *Droid Hunter*, coming to us courtesy of MGM Interactive and developers Eurocom.

What makes a clone anyway? In *Droid Hunter's* case it's the graphic engine and play mechanics. The overhead perspective, the freaky lighting effects, the blood splitches when enemies die—it's all so...so... *Loaded!* The 20-30 fps polygon engine, however, is a somewhat more appreciable feat in *Droid Hunter* (particularly with its multi-floor levels). The gameplay is also very close to *Loaded* (mindless shooting, pick-ups, teleports, massive carnage, etc.) except for one major difference...a feature so cool, so important, so un-*Loaded*, it almost raises *Droid Hunter* above clone status: *Smash TV* control. Oh yeah, if I'm playing multiple levels of hard-core overhead blasting action, *Smash TV* controls are a necessity (▲ shoots up, ■ left, ● right, ✕ down). You're offered these fine controls (strafing too!) as soon as you get your hands on one of the many droid power-ups located around each level. Carefully shoot a robot into submission (he'll turn red, at which point you STOP firing and jump in), and their armor and firepower are all yours. You can find "Lockjaw," a grenade-launching tank; "Four Foot," an insect-like sniper; "Laughing Cavalier," a 9mm machine-gunner clown, or six other hard-hittin' droids. Let me re-emphasize how cool the droids' control is, and how satisfying it is to lay waste to foes in such a user-friendly manner.

It's too early to make any real comparisons to *ReLoaded*, but from first impressions *Droid Hunter* squares up very favorably. The levels are long, the techno music is great, and the graphics are pretty. I'll be back next month with a full review. **G**



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - EUROCOM

PUBLISHER - MGM INTER.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



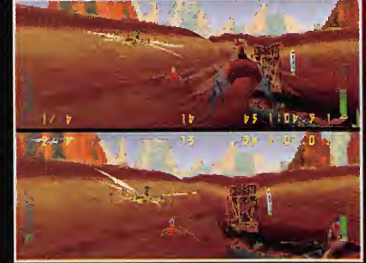
GLITCH
Control is everything!



BUG RIDERS • N-SPACE/GT INT. • RACING/ACTION • OCTOBER



This unique racer puts you on the back of giant bugs, each with their own characteristics, in a 3D race for the Emperor's throne. Smooth 30fps action, over 22 characters; vital signs include 16 spectacular weapons and six unique environments, each with branching courses that actually evolve! Cool!!



REBEL MOON • FENRIS WOLF/GT INT. • 1ST PERSON SHOOTER/ADV. • SUMMER '97

Based on the successful Pocket Books sci-fi novel, *Rebel Moon* is a 3D actioner that allows you to participate in the battles of the First Lunar War. The game features 27 levels of sci-fi shooting goodness complete with a wide variety of missions, including offensive and defensive tactics. Also featured is variable gravity combat (?) and vertically stacked rooms which can only be reached via jet pack. Additionally, the designers are paying special attention to the lighting, one of the PS's strongest features. We'll have more on *Rebel Moon* as soon as the development progresses.



SYNDICATE WARS • EA • ACTION ADVENTURE • SUMMER '97



It's been a long time in coming but *Syndicate Wars* looks well worth the wait! With its 360-degree rotating views, hot lighting, and intricate gameplay, there's no doubt it'll suck you in for days. 25 weapons and 30 cities complete with realistic search lights, fires, and



explosions await your grenades and insanity gas. Look for *Syndicate Wars*' PS debut this Spring.



SPAWN • SONY • 3D ACTION • SUMMER



A live action movie, an HBO Animation series premiering this fall (complete with all the *Spawn* carnage we've come to know and love), a mega successful toy line, and now, a spectacular 3D PS game. Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* is the next generation comic book phenomena, no doubt about it. And rightly so, *Spawn* rocks in every way. We actually interviewed Todd (it'll run in the July issue) and are happy to report that he's as picky about the game as he has been every other aspect of *Spawn*'s rise to fame. We'll have a more thorough report next month as we begin our monthly *Spawn* watch.



DYNASTY WARRIORS • KOEI • 3D FIGHTING • APRIL



The fact that KOEI has crafted a fighter shocked us all but what shocked us even more is that it's really quite rockin.' Makes sense I guess since strategy plays a big role in fighters especially when weapons come into play. Without having completely dissected *DW* yet we can say that the polygons are as solid as can be, the animation quite spectacular and the lighting, as you can see, is fantastic. We'll have a complete review next month.

AND FINALLY, A WORD ABOUT THE CONTINUING JOYS OF DRACULA X...



As we've now combed through every crevice of *Dracula X*, we are even more astonished than previously stated. Not only is *DX* simply monstrous in size, but the story, as it unfolds, is truly one of epic proportions. Since the US debut is still a ways off we won't reveal the twists and turns which will have you screaming praise, and hope that others don't either, as this game is riddled with surprises which should be preserved for the player. In any case, do not under any circumstances pass *DX* up, no matter what you read elsewhere. Anyone who even utters a comparison to 16-bit ought to be shackled and flogged. We anxiously await the US version and hope that Konami has preserved the art from the import. Speaking of the import, the game comes in a double CD, complete with a *Castlevania* music compilation disc and a super high quality art book to be tucked away with your gaming treasures. One can only pray that these goods make the US launch. More *DX* is coming soon...



IN DEVELOPMENT

Unless you're a clued-in Saturn owner or a die-hard corridor fan, chances are you've never heard of Lobotomy Software. But all that is about to change. In one fell swoop, Lobotomy has risen from the relative obscurity of coding multimedia titles for Microsoft to become one of the most highly regarded Saturn developers in the USA, entrusted with the not insignificant responsibility of converting both Duke Nukem 3D and Quake to Sega's dark

LOBOTOMY SOFTWARE EXPOSED...

THE CREATORS OF POWERSLAVE RETURN WITH SATURN CONVERSIONS OF THE BIGGEST CORRIDOR SHOOTERS IN EXISTENCE! AND WE WERE THERE...



GROUP PICTURE

FRONT ROW - BRIAN, TROY, WILLIAM
 SECOND ROW - TOM, PAUL KNUTZEN, KEVIN
 THIRD ROW - ERIC, JOHN, DOMINICK, PAT, PAUL LANGE
 BACK ROW PAUL HAUGERUD, JOHN VAN DEUSEN, JEFF, DAVID, PAUL SCHREIBER, SCOTT

PICTURE LEFT
 SCOTT BRANSTON

PICTURE RIGHT
 BRIAN McNEELY

horse. The reason? A game named PowerSlave.

In 1993 a group of friends working for Nintendo of America quit their jobs to start their own company: Lobotomy. Initially working out of co-founder Paul Lange's apartment, they soon found local office space in Redmond, Seattle, and began work on a number of demos that eventually led to their first major in-house project, a PC first person shooter originally called Ruins, now known as PowerSlave.

PowerSlave on PC was a straightforward 'Doom' clone with an Egyptian theme that utilized the same graphics engine as Duke Nukem 3D (3D Realms Build engine). PC PowerSlave was great fun, and helped Lobotomy secure a contract with Playmates for both a PS and Saturn conversion.

Initially, Lobotomy wanted to port PC PowerSlave over to the consoles with little or no changes, but thankfully the size and complexity of the PC levels made this impossible. So the Lobotomy design team, lead by creative director and co-founder Brian McNeely, went

back to the drawing board and re-designed PowerSlave from scratch to incorporate new level design and a unique action/adventure structure that would later prove to be the game's greatest asset.

For a number of reasons (mainly that there were no decent corridor games on Saturn at that time), Lobotomy started work on the Saturn version of PowerSlave first, and with the help of lead programmer Ezra Driesbach's stunning graphics engine (called

THE POWERFUL LINE-UP OF SMASH TITLES FROM LOBOTOMY... POWERSLAVE - QUAKE - DUKE NUKEM 3D





**SEGA ACTUALLY TURNED DOWN POWERSLAVE!
RAVE REVIEWS FROM THE PRESS SOON CHANGED THEIR TUNE!**

choice. For starters, SOA had actually turned down PowerSlave when they were offered it a while earlier (er, riiigght). Then, once they had obtained the rights for Duke and Quake from GT (who also overlooked Lobotomy), Sega farmed the games out to two other developers whose initial efforts were, shall we say, 'less than impressive' (they shall remain nameless). It was about this time that the specialist press started raving over PowerSlave, and Sega finally saw the light and approached Lobotomy at the end of '96.

Currently Lobotomy is working on both games, with the companies 20-or-so staff split roughly down the middle on each project. They have a number of games on the back burner, including PowerSlave 2 (a 3rd person Tomb Raider style adventure starring a young King



Slave Driver!) they proceeded to create a superlative first person shooter that to this day has not been bettered as a one player corridor experience.

Next came PS PowerSlave, (or 'PowerSlave Remix' as designer Dominick Meissner calls it), which benefited from some nice new graphical effects (check out the water and lighting), slightly tweaked level design and a very smooth engine courtesy lead PS programmer Jeff Blazier. Both versions of PowerSlave are utterly superb, and fans of the genre should hunt them down NOW!

PowerSlave understandably caused quite a stir in the industry, particularly the Saturn version which single-handedly put the Saturn on the map as a platform for corridor shooters. So when Sega secured the rights from GT to publish the two greatest PC corridor games in existence on Saturn (Duke Nukem 3D and Quake) there was really only one choice of developer, right? Er, wrong.

As ridiculous as it may sound, Lobotomy wasn't Sega's first Ramses), Aquaria (like NiGHTS underwater, but with full 3D control) and a PC strategy game called Gothic. They are currently in the process of applying to become an N64 developer (Aquaria will be their first N64 title) and never miss the opportunity to snatch a quick game of Death Tank during lunch break. Anyway, enough about Lobotomy. Turn the page and check out the games you fools! **K**

X-FILES: CASE #1107 - DEATH TANK

Scully and I have been investigating the occurrence of a videogame that is said to be so addictive that it causes long term physical and psychological damage to the player.



Little is known of this game, save for the fact that it is called Death Tank, and it supports up to six players simultaneously with the Saturn multi-tap. We know the game is not available to buy in any stores, but we've had reports that it can be found by collecting all 23 hidden Team Dolls in a game named PowerSlave. A fanatical cult who call themselves "Lobotomy" are believed to worship the game at least once a day, normally during lunch break. I believe it has something to do with the alien abduction of my sister and a big government conspiracy. Scully doesn't. The case continues...



QUAKE

the invasion of saturn has begun...

Speak its name in hushed tones of reverence. For it is the stuff that videogaming legends are made of. iD Software's dynamic sequel to Doom 2 exploded onto the PC gaming scene last summer, and almost immediately became the single best reason to own a PC. Put simply, Quake is one of the greatest videogames ever made. It is a unique combination of old and new: a collision of pure, instinctive gameplay with some of the most advanced 3D graphics yet seen on any home platform. It's dark, it's violent, and this fall it's coming to a Saturn near you.

To a Saturn! A year ago that would have sounded like some kind of bad joke. But that was before PowerSlave. Now the promise of a remarkably accurate conversion of Quake on Saturn is more than just a dream—it's fast becoming a reality. Lobotomy is on the case, and after seeing what they've done in such a short space of time, you'd be hard pressed to doubt their convictions.

While I was at Lobotomy I got the opportunity to actually play an early build of Saturn Quake (which is where these shots come from). There were only two playable levels (the entranceway and e1m1) with no monsters, but still I was

...pass through the portal towards your deepest, darkest nightmare.

PROCEDURE EVAC.112110044E

doN't hesitate...muSt...
muSt sHut down this evil.

EVAC.11211000E

the twisted creators of quake stumble forth...

GF: Quake runs on a minimum spec PC of a Pentium 60 with 8 megs of RAM. Just how on earth is the Saturn going to cope?!

LOB: We're working hard to squeeze every ounce of power out of the Saturn. Our primary goal is to successfully capture the mood, look and feel that is so unique to Quake. Certain compromises are always made when porting a game from one platform to another, but so far, we're very excited about the fact that so few compromises

have been made.

GF: The Slave Driver engine featured 3D environments with 2D enemies. Quake is fully 3D. Will you somehow be able to modify the Slave Driver engine to incorporate 3D enemies, or will you have to create a new engine from scratch?

LOB: The Slave Driver engine is being modified both to further improve its performance in rendering the environment, as well as to allow for 'pick-ups' and enemies to be rep-

resented as true 3D polygon objects.

GF: Quake featured some quite spectacular dynamic lighting effects. Will you be able to keep these in?

LOB: This is one area where we feel we'll actually be able to outperform the PC version of Quake. The Slave Driver engine allows us not only to use dynamic lighting effects, but also to specify color. We have also added sector tinting, and expanded the set of options with regard to



amazed. It was Quake on Saturn. And I don't mean it captured the 'spirit' of Quake. I mean it was Quake. Obviously there were some compromises, the main one being the textures look a bit grainier right now, but the game controlled beautifully (analog support was already in) and the graphics engine was running smoothly at an average of 20+ fps with amazing lighting effects. Lobotomy is confident that they can keep this level of speed and fluidity even when the monsters have been added. With their track record you can't help but believe them.

However, there is a catch. There always is. At present there are no plans to make Saturn Quake multi-player in any shape or form. Quake is a good one player game, but it's a great multi-player game. id designed

Quake almost exclusively with deathmatch in mind, and without it the game is incomplete. We can only hope that Lobotomy finds a solution before the game is released later this year. And if link support really is impossible, then I recommend that Lobotomy look into some of the Deathmatch 'Bots' currently available on the internet. At least then single players could get a taste of the greatest multi-player experience on the planet.

K
...it will soon Be over..swarming...
...hell's hordes everywhere... over soon.



fixed, pre-rendered lighting to include radiant, angular, random and negative light sources to the engine.

GF: Quake is a game that is played almost exclusively with the mouse to look in all directions while moving. Will you be using the analog controller to replicate the PC control system?

LOB: We will be supporting both the analog and digital controller for the Saturn. The default controller settings will provide what

we consider the optimum for play, but the player will also have the ability to remap the controls to their own preference.

GF: As with Duke Nukem 3D, will Sega allow you to keep the game's extreme level of gore and violence?

LOB: We hope so. It seems that's what the gamers want. As was mentioned before, our goal is to be as true to the original in

terms of play, detail, and theme as possible. Sega has assured us that they do not intend to censor the game, as has been done with some previous ports of id's titles. GF: Will the game feature Net-Link or cable-link support?

LOB: There are currently no plans to support the Net-Link or cable-link. GF: Thanks for the time guys.




DEVELOPER - LOBOTOMY

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - N/A



KNIGHTMARE
You're not going to believe this...

DUKE NUKEM

3D



starring ugly monsters



co-starring huge weapons



Duke Nukem 3D and Quake are without a doubt the two greatest first person shooters currently available for the PC. This is not a matter of opinion. This is a fact. There are others on the way that show potential (Prey, Unreal, Hexen 2, Jedi Knight, Shadow

Warrior), but for now the throne jointly belongs to Duke and Quake. But how can two games co-exist at the top spot? Isn't one better than the other? Well, yes and no.

You see, while Quake is undoubtedly the champion of PC multiplayer gaming, Duke Nukem 3D trounces it as a single player experience. That's not to say Quake isn't fun as a one player game, or that Duke isn't a riot in multiplayer mode (indeed, many prefer it to Quake), but in my opinion the two games just seem to excel in different areas. Which is fine by me.

There are a number of reasons why Duke Nukem 3D is such a good single player game. For a start, the level design is inspired. Duke is one of the few corridor games where the environments actually look like real places. Whether it's an abandoned cinema, a Chinese restaurant, a movie studio, or a sunken city, in Duke you really feel like you're *somewhere*. Secondly, every level is filled with countless little interactive touches

the Duke Nukem 3D team talked tough... until I kicked their @#*&%!!

GF: Although the Saturn PowerSlave engine was created from scratch, does it have any similarities to 3D Realms Build engine?

LOB: Though the PC version of PowerSlave did use the Build engine, the console versions were created considerably later and use an entirely new engine we created ourselves. The Slave Driver engine was designed to maximize the speed and reduce the world information to its minimum on Saturn, so it's vastly different from the Build engine in almost every way.

GF: Have you made any significant modifications or improvements to the Slave Driver engine for Duke Nukem 3D?

LOB: Ezra has continued in his usual amazing style to add refinements to the engine as they've been needed. The biggest visible changes will be in the world lighting and some techniques which will allow for larger areas to be completely displayed without using any of the fog tricks so

prevalent today. More speed has been squeezed out of the engine, so the game will feature frame rates comparable to PowerSlave despite the added complexity of Duke's levels.

GF: How much of PC Duke Nukem 3D's graphics and textures have you been able to use to create the Saturn version?

LOB: Much of the original art had to be re-sized and/or cut-up into mosaics to meet the requirements of our engine and still express the original artist's intent. To save memory, the art had to be color-reduced and some mosaics were optimized to use fewer unique tiles. Actually, we're very excited about the fact that we've been able to use the existing textures from the PC version with only minor changes to faithfully reproduce the level environments.

GF: How easy was it to convert the levels from the PC Build engine into the Slave Driver engine? Did you have to redesign them in BREW?

LOB: Since the Build engine was not in true 3D, most of the Duke levels are laid out in pieces. The PowerSlave engine is real 3D, so we have had to link together all of the Duke stage pieces in real space. It's like putting together a giant 3D puzzle. We really want to maintain the integrity and play of the original stage design, and are striving hard to do so.

GF: Have you been able to incorporate all of Duke Nukem 3D's finer details into the Saturn, such as destructible scenery, light switches, blood splatters and bullet holes in the walls?

LOB: We've already incorporated most of these features into the current version and hope to include many more by project completion. Memory will be the deciding factor, so we're looking for ways of getting as much as possible out of the available memory.

GF: Have you been able to retain all of the frames of animation used in PC Duke for the enemies?

"It's time to kick ass and chew bubble gum..."

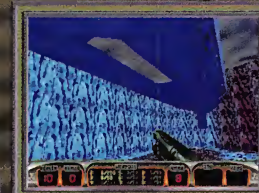


that really immerse you in the game world. Light switches can be flicked, underground trains can be ridden and nearly every piece of scenery can be destroyed! Very satisfying.

Currently, Saturn Duke Nukem 3D is progressing at an astounding pace. The version I played only contained the first three levels, but already it's apparent that this conversion is going to be something special. The Slave Driver engine has once again been put to good use, with awesome

lighting effects and frame rates comparable to PowerSlave. All of the weapons are in, as are most of the monsters and level detail. You can already smash glass, blow up the corpses of dead enemies and ricochet the freeze ray around corners to freeze enemies. There's still a long way to go, but Lobotomy is confident that they'll make their May deadline in time for the game to ship for summer.

One last detail: the day I visited Lobotomy they got the Net-Link mode up and running for the first time, and I witnessed two player action with hardly any lag time at all. Highly impressive. There's no word yet on whether Saturn Duke will support cooperative play, but at least DukeMatch is guaranteed. And boy, does the Net-Link ever need a game like this. **K**



...and I'm all outta gum!!"



LOB: From the start our goal has been to retain as much detail as possible, and the enemies are no exception. We've made a few compromises, but you'd be hard pressed to notice the differences.

GF: Are you including analog pad support? Maybe even the option to use the analog pad as a mouse-look alternative, Turok style?

LOB: Duke already has analog support. As for an alternative Turok/mouse style, we will have to wait and see.

GF: Have you been able to include ALL of PC Duke's 30+ levels from all three episodes? Including secret levels?

LOB: All of the stages from all 3 episodes will be present in the Saturn version. And the secret levels will be there as well...

GF: Is Sega going to make you remove any of the smut or violence, eg. the profanity, the strippers, the dog turds, the ability to give strippers money to remove their tops or the risqué cut scenes?

LOB: From the outset of the project Sega made it very clear that they wanted to leave the game intact. So the content should remain intact.

GF: The inclusion of Team Dolls into PowerSlave gave the game literally months of gameplay. Do you plan to add anything similar to Duke?

LOB: One of the neat things about the Team Dolls in PowerSlave was that no one knew about them right away, so they were a total surprise for the gamers who found them. If we were to put anything similar in Duke... well, I guess you'll just have to find out yourself.

GF: Might you add any other secret stuff?

LOB: Like a secret Lobotomy-designed level? I don't know...

GF: Saturn PowerSlave featured some amazing lighting effects. Duke on PC had no lighting effects. Will you be adding lighting to Saturn Duke?

LOB: In a big way. We're throwing as many in as we can get away with. It's a trick you don't want

to overuse, nor lose frame rate over, but it really is impressive to those who have seen the new look of Duke.

GF: Sega has confirmed that Duke Nukem 3D will be Net Link compatible. How difficult is this to implement?

LOB: Because the Slave Driver engine was written before Net Link, it was conceived as a one player game, and the code was written accordingly. We're overhauling the guts of it right now, and as anyone who has added multi-player compatibility after the fact will tell you, it's not quick or easy. But the Net Link library is straightforward, and we should have basic net matches in a week or two.

GF: Cool!

Well that about wraps up our special feature on Lobotomy and their forthcoming Saturn titles. We're expecting finished versions soon with GameFan reviews in hot pursuit. Keep it here...

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - LOBOTOMY

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2+

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



KNIGHTMARE
Yes, the strippers are going to be in it!

MANX TT Super Bike



**SUPERBIKERACING
SATISFACTION
GUARANTEED!**



THE WIND WILL BLOW YOU AWAY!



Manx TT represents the first time an AM coin-op conversion has been handled out of house. AM3's premiere console coders, the CTS team, were busy finishing up Daytona CCE for the Japanese market (twice as good as the American version, fact fans) so Sega farmed out Manx TT to a relatively unknown European company named Tantalus.

Tantalus, formerly Perfect Entertainment Ltd., was previously responsible for porting a number of Psygnosis' PS games over to Saturn (WipeOut, Destruction Derby, Discworld) with varying degrees of success. It's not that they were bad, it's just that they weren't up to the standard set by Sega's own in-house conversions. So to say I was surprised when I heard that Sega had entrusted Manx TT to Tantalus is something of an understatement. Basically, I feared the worst. And have my fears been vindicated? Well, let's find out.

Manx TT is a good looking Model 2 coin-op,

particularly the TT course, and believe it or not, Tantalus has done a great job of re-creating the coin-op's stunning visuals with remarkable authenticity. OK, there is pop-up. It's not as bad as Daytona CCE (American version!), but it is noticeable. However, as with Daytona CCE, once you start racing seriously you don't have time to worry about things like pop-up, and it ceases to be an issue. The frame rate is a constant 30, and even though the game isn't in high resolution (as Sega promised) the textures are clean and there's little polygon shearing. All of the music and effects are taken directly from the arcade.

While I had no doubt that Tantalus would be able to recreate the game psychics 100%, I was a little concerned as to how the 'bike' cabinet control system would convert to the Saturn? Well, once again I find myself pleasantly surprised. The standard D-pad leaves a lot to be desired, but hook up the analog pad and you'll be amazed at how well the bikes



DEVELOPER - TANTALUS

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

PUBLISHER - SEGA

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



KNIGHTMARE
A solid conversion.
Nothing more,
nothing less.

control. Once you get the hang of the whole 'lean into the corner' mechanics you'll be able to reach some pretty insane speeds, and catching some air at 320 kph is an exhilarating experience.

Manx TT's weakest area is definitely the CPU AI. Manx is another one of those games where the CPU riders keep pace with you no matter how fast, or slow, you go. This in itself wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for the fact that a) the front 4 riders (of eight) seem attached to you by an invisible piece of rubber—overtake one and watch him bounce right back; and b) when a CPU bike hits you, you lose a lot of speed and they don't. I suppose in the long run it makes the game more challenging, but in the short term it's just plain irritating.

Manx TT in the arcades only had two tracks (Laxey and TT) and obviously that's not going to be enough for a console racer.

Tantalus' solution is to provide a reversed/mirrored version of both tracks, thereby effectively doubling the number of courses.



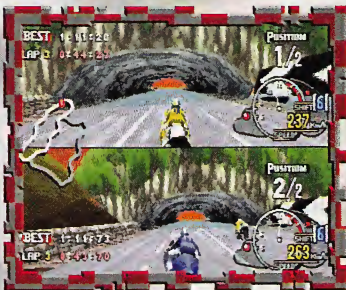
This may sound like a cheap shot, but it actually works better than you'd expect. Going around the tracks backward and mirrored, they seem almost unrecognizable, and while new tracks would have been appreciated, it's better than standard mirroring.

Tantalus has added four extra modes exclusive to Saturn Manx TT: Time Trial, Practice, Challenge and Super Bikes. Time Trial and Practice are self explanatory, while Challenge gives you a choice of multiple bikes and then takes you through each of the four tracks in sequence. Finish first on all tracks (not easy) and you gain access to the Super Bikes, three stupidly powerful bikes that kick some serious asphalt.

So there you have it. This is a solid conversion of Manx TT. Not spectacular, not 'arcade perfect', but good. It has its problems, but in the long run the plus points far outweigh the minus points. If it makes you feel any better, I didn't even expect it to be this good. If you liked the arcade, or are in the market for a bike racing game, then you definitely won't be disappointed. Just be warned in advance: This is a perfectionist's racing game. If you're the kind of player who likes to bounce off walls and not lose five positions you'd better look elsewhere. K



ACTUAL SAMPLED SOUNDS FROM REAL TT BIKES!



Manx TT features a split screen two player mode, as is the trend these days. The clipping isn't as good as one player mode, but then it's not so bad that it hinders the action (like Daytona CCE - American Version!). It's great fun, and the frame rate remains constant throughout, so it gets my thumbs up. Of course, a link-up mode would have been nice...



WELCOME TO THE NEXT SPEED LEVEL



FIGHTING FORCE

0000000000
HAWK



0000000000
HAWK



0000000000
HAWK



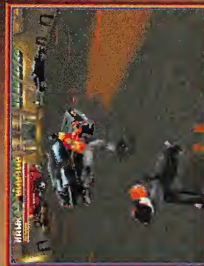
Mace Daniels, private investigator, is working on a strange case. A theoretical scientist has been kidnapped, and the sinister Dr. Zeng has been linked to the abduction. Top secret equipment from major research facilities has also turned-up missing, again pointing suspiciously to the good doctor. Mace calls up her buddy Hawk Manson, a hard-core vigilante, to help investigate. So begins the story of Core's amazing *Fighting Force*.

Fighting Force is attempting to effectively combine a complex fighting engine and a real time 3D environment — and thus far it's going *real* well. Hawk, the Cody-type (from the other *FF*) fighter of the bunch, is the only playable character right now. The other three characters, Mace, Ben, and Alana, are in preparation. Taking Hawk to the streets for the first time is a humbling experience. I believed that real beat-'em-ups belonged in 2D, period. Alas, *Fighting Force* trounces that tradition. The environments are so perfectly detailed, and the fighting system so accessible, one play later and I was hooked.

Hawk's walking around this giant 3D environment, flanked by beautiful shading and depth, when three punks show-up. Fully-modeled polygonal taxis vroom by in the distance, while two of the thugs pause to pick up weapons (stuff like guns, lasers, rocket launchers) and the third moves closer. Excellent trip-hop tunes accompany the tense scenario. Hawk accepts a mean blow to the head, but returns with a flurry of jabs, showering the air with blood. The other punks come to the aid of their CPU brethren, brandishing wicked pipes and knives. Hawk takes a mean blade to the ribs, but a blinding series of roundhouse kicks and both punks are disarmed and launched to the pavement. These fighting controls are solid, with two attacks, a throw, and a jump button, while the pad moves your fighter *Resident Evil*-style (with a backflip thrown in for good measure). Moves per character are in the range of 40 to 50, and that's not even counting special moves or weapons. *Die Hard* Arcade beware!

The playable stages (street, elevator, office) look fantastic — virtually identical to the PS version — and a total of ten levels are planned. Flying airships, trains, even islands, play host to bikers, gunmen, and insane bosses. All this, and sweet two-player action with a ton of polygons on-screen (£ no slow-mo), make *FF* one of the most promising games this year. As soon as we get more on *Fighting Force* you'll have it. **G**

Oww! That's gonna leave a mark!



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - CORE
PUBLISHER - EIDOS INT.
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 2
DIFFICULTY - N/A
AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER

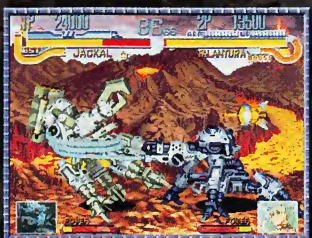
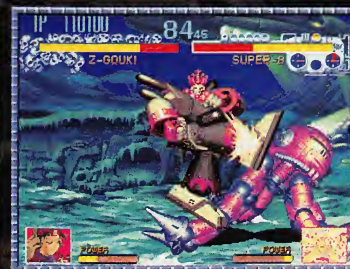
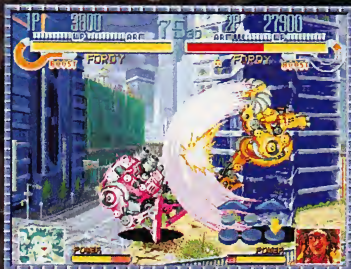


GLITCH
Streets of Core?



CYBERBOTS

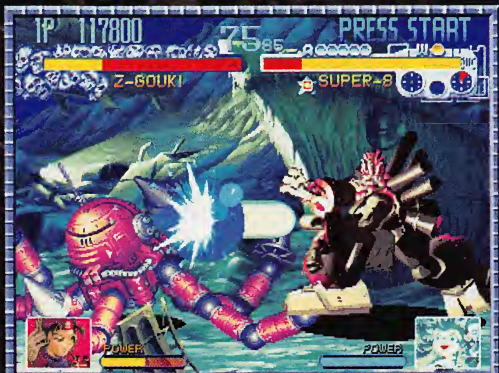
CAPCOM'S MECH BRAWLER STORMS THE SATURN!



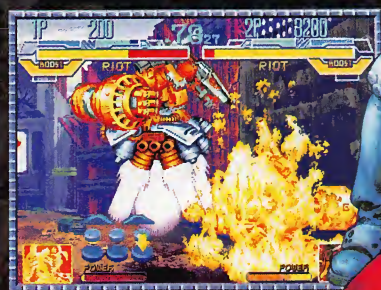
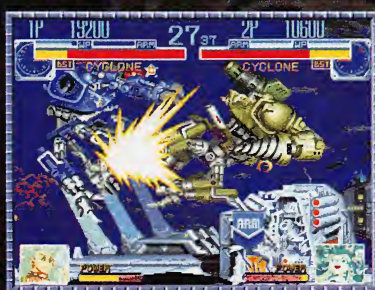
I never played *Cyberbots* in the arcades and so can't really comment on the quality of the conversion (our resident Capcom expert says it's perfect). However, what I can comment on is the quality of the game: *Cyberbots* is 2D INSANITY!!! Take a close look at the screen shots accompanying this text. Impressive? That's

NOTHING! Just wait till you see this baby moving. It's MADNESS! Huge, huge, beautifully animated sprites doing battle in front of equally huge animated parallax backdrops—*Cyberbots* is the best looking 2D game on the Saturn TO DATE!

Cyberbots gameplay is firmly rooted in the *Street Fighter 2* school of beat-'em-ups. The basic mechanics are the same, the move commands are similar, and the combo system (two-in-ones, etc.) is identical. However, *Cyberbots* features a couple of gameplay innovations that you should be aware of. First, the game uses four buttons, not six: Attack 1, Attack 2, Weapon and Dash. Your mechs can jet around in the air for a limited period, and you can charge up your super bar by holding down two buttons, SNK style. Every mech also has a command throw to rip off your opponent mech's arm, thus taking away some of their moves! Hardcore!

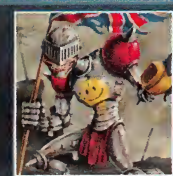


Cyberbots may not be as precise as *Street Fighter* (it's too chunky for that) but as with any Capcom title there is a great deal of depth behind the awesome visuals. And best of all, the home version has a new rendered character: Zero Gouki! Currently, Capcom have no plans to release *Cyberbots* in the States, so 2D fans had better go import! **K**



DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

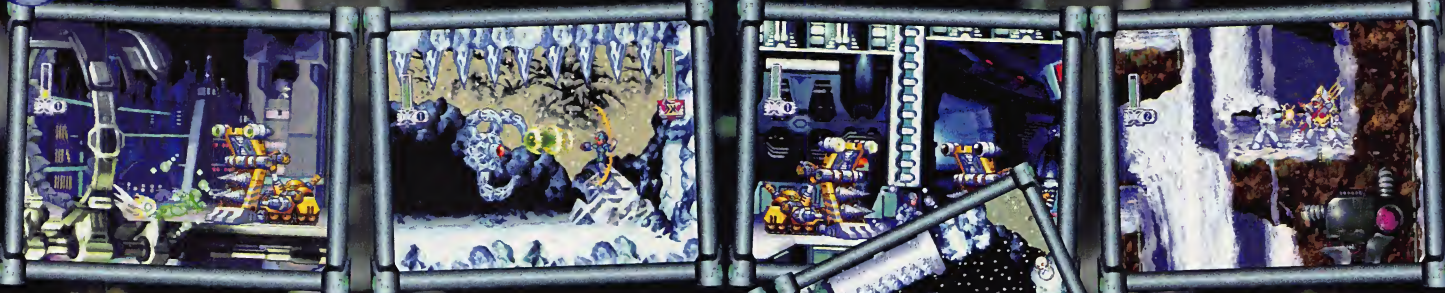


KNIGHTMARE
Cyberbots is 2D insanity!

MEGA MAN X4



Yes! another 32-bit *MegaMan*! From famine... to feast! It may come hot on the heels of *MegaMan 8*, but *MegaMan X4*, being a product of the X series, sports an entirely new look and feel when compared to *MegaMan 8* (which, if I had it to do over again would score 10 points higher). *X4* surges ahead with a hard-edged, industrial look, augmented with generous helpings of pre-rendered CG background elements. Thankfully, the characters are completely hand-drawn, and animated to a level surpassing most recent Capcom coin-ops, save *SFIII*. Our extremely early preview version only had a few bits and pieces from a few levels, so we can't really comment on the gameplay, but from the looks of it *MMX4* will be much harder than the challenging *MM8*. As with *MegaMan X3*, you can choose both

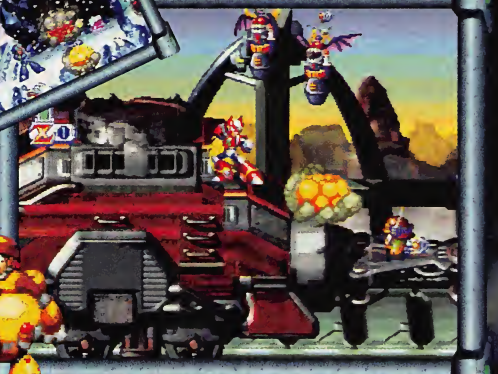


MegaMan X, who has his trademark long-range X-Buster, and Zero, the blonde-haired, saber-wielding robot who can do much more damage but has little range. There may be a third controllable character in the final, too: A mysterious new 'bot (bottom right) makes an appearance on the stage select screen.

There's not much more to say,

except keep an

eye on GameFan for more *MegaMan X4* and an update on the PlayStation version of the game! **ES**



MegaMan X and Zero are back in their biggest adventure yet, 32bit style!!



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - N/A
AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



E. STORM
Two MM'S in one year? I must be dreaming...

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NINTENDO 64 THEATER 64



WAR GODS

BILLIONS OF YEARS AGO, A BEING FROM A DISTANT GALAXY WAS TRANSPORTING A PRECIOUS CARGO OF LIFE GIVING ORE. THE TURBULENT FORMATION OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM CAUSED HIS SHIP TO CRASH, AND SCATTERED THE ORE OVER THE MOLTEN SURFACE OF PLANET EARTH. THROUGH THE MILLENNIA, TEN HUMANS CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THE ORE AND WERE TRANSFORMED INTO SUPER-EVOLVED WARRIORS. THESE ARE THE WAR GODS!

Know this: I am only reviewing N64 *WarGods* because no-one else in the office would. Both the coin-op original and subsequent PS conversion earned themselves such a bad reputation that the mere mention of the game was enough to send the entire GameFan editorial staff running for cover. And when the dust settled I was slowest.

But has the whole thing been blown out of proportion? Is *WarGods* really that bad? Is *WarGods* to beat-'em-ups what *OJ* is to the legal system? Well that all depends on how much you like *Mortal Kombat*.

You see, for all intents and purposes *WarGods* IS *Mortal*



AHAUKINI

In a vision, AHAUKINI, an evil high priest, learned that untold power lay at the bottom of his tribe's sacrificial well. One by one, he sent his slaves to their death diving to reach the Ore. Finally, overwhelmed with desire, he plunged to the well's depths and retrieved the Ore.

ANUBIS

While searching for lost treasure in the Valley of the Kings, a grave robber uncovered a hidden burial chamber. The thief tried to steal its treasures, unaware that the Ore had been placed in the chamber to destroy anyone who entered. His body was destroyed by the Ore, but his soul is cursed to return as ANUBIS.

KABUKI JO

A feared medieval samurai discovered the Ore on the eve of a great battle. Overwhelmed by its power, he slaughtered his men in a rage of fire and fury. Shamed by the destruction he had caused, he became KABUKI JO, an outcast determined to master the power that consumes him.

MAXIMUS

MAXIMUS, a mighty gladiator, fought for the entertainment of his masters. During a great festival that celebrated the Ore, he battled to determine which master would possess it. He killed his opponent, but slaughtered his masters as well. He took the Ore and escaped. Consumed by its power, he fights for all who have been enslaved.

PAGAN

Ancient manuscripts revealed the location of the Ore to PAGAN, a mistress of the Black Arts. She arrived at the ruins of a cathedral where the Ore was once worshipped. PAGAN summoned forth the hidden Ore by reciting the manuscript's incantations. The Ore increased her hunger for power and destruction. She will destroy anyone who stands in her way.



Kombat 3D. The button set up is the same (low kick, high kick, low punch, high punch, block), the gameplay is very similar (albeit with the added third dimension) and the atmosphere is trademark 'Midway.' You can perform trademark *MK* moves such as the uppercut and leg sweep in exactly the same way as you would in *MK*, and the top it all off the game even has *MK*-style fatalities.

So why didn't Midway just add *MK* characters and call it *MK3D*? Who knows? Maybe Tobias and Boon are doing something different with *MK4* and wouldn't allow yet another generic sequel (albeit in 3D). Or maybe Midway didn't want to risk sinking their most successful franchise on the untested seas of 3D, and instead sent in *WarGods* to test

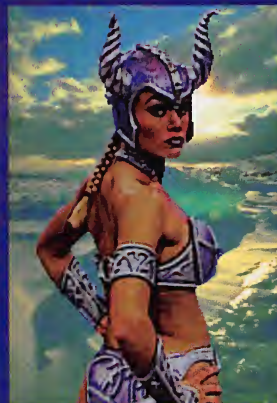
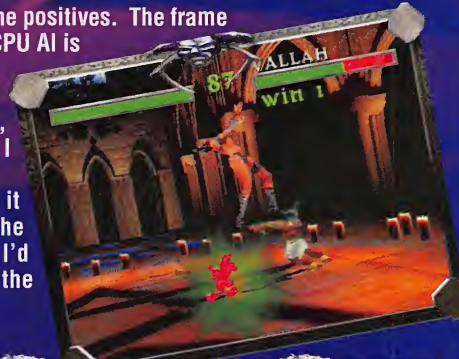
the waters. Or maybe Midway just wanted to release a 3D fighter that *MK* fans could feel at home with while waiting for *MK4*. Whatever the reason, *WarGods* is the *Mortal*

On the positive side, *WarGods 64* is better than the PS version. Midway has made an effort to fix some of criticism levied at the coin-op, and on that point at least they are to be commended. The 3D backgrounds are excellent, the fatalities are suitably gruesome and a lot of imagination has gone into the game's characters and moves. This is undoubtedly the best version of *WarGods* out there, and *WarGods* fans are going to love it. Heck, for a moment there in two-player mode I even started to enjoy myself.

But despite Midway's best intentions, the negatives still outweigh the positives. The frame rate is jerky, the fighter's animation is stilted and unconvincing, the CPU AI is painfully cheap, the characters are unbalanced, and despite the 3D button the game still plays like *MK*!

Now I know there are a lot of *MK* fans out there, but personally, I've never really been to big a fan. I didn't get into it in 2D and I sure as heck can't get into it in 3D.

Unfortunately, N64 owners don't have a lot of options when it comes to 3D beat-'em-ups. *Dark Rift* will be along soon, but in the mean time it's *WarGods* or nothing. I know which one of the two I'd choose, but hey! If you love *MK* and really, really can't wait, then the world of *WarGods* awaits. **K**



TAK

Thousands of years ago, a kingdom worshipped the Ore as a God. A rival kingdom declared war to capture the Ore. In the face of defeat, the king hid the Ore in a stone idol. The idol came to life as TAK, avenger of a lost civilization.

VALLAH

VALLAH, a warrior princess, became separated from a battle during a great ice storm. Taking shelter in a nearby cave, she saw a glowing light trapped inside a translucent wall of ice. Hacking away at the ice, her sword finally made contact with the Ore. VALLAH was transformed into a viking Goddess, and rules the realm of ice.

VOODOO

In a Caribbean village, a witch doctor enslaved his people with Black Magic and arcane spells. One night in desperation, the villagers captured the witch doctor and burnt him to death. They threw his body into a forbidden swamp, unaware that it hid a deposit of the Ore. The Ore's energy brought his corpse back to life as VOODOO, God of the undead.

CY-5

The power of the Ore is timeless. In the year 2096, scientists will implant the Ore into CY-5, an advanced cyborg, unaware that the Ore has life giving power. CY-5 will kill the scientists. It will conclude that more Ore is needed for greater human consciousness. CY-5 will fight in a ruthless, systematic manner to achieve its goal.

WARHEAD

Government officials were worried that an experiment to merge nuclear weapons with the Ore was in jeopardy. They sent their top operative to investigate. When he arrived at the research center, the building exploded, covering his body with fragments of the Ore. The soldier was transformed into WARHEAD, a super-human fighter.

R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64



DEVELOPER - MIDWAY

PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CART

OF PLAYERS - 2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE

"Are you a god?"
"Uhh, no."
"Then DIE!!!"

ClayFighter

SIXTY THREE
IN A THIRD

EXCLUSIVE !!

UPDATE

NINTENDO 64



DEVELOPER - INTERPLAY

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - JULY



E. STORM

Jim and Booger in one game!! Sign me UP!

BONKERS BY THE
BUNKERS...
KAPOW!!

KUNG POW! IT'S
A WOK BLOCK!!

JIM N' BOOGER
FIGHT IT OUT!!
GARDOVY!



What makes a good fighting game? Is it gore, with oozi'n' limbs and decapitations? Maybe it's meticulous hand-drawn art and deep strategy. It may even be fluid polygonal warriors running at 60fps. Then again, it may be rippin' farts, flickin' boogers, and sliming your opponent. When it comes to the latter, there's only one way to go... Clayfightin'!

A successful 16-bit series which has seen two incarnations, ClayFighter always hit the nail on the head in relation to the system's capabilities it was running on. The limitations of 16-bit, however, are now long gone and so

Interplay has taken the action into the world of 3D as only clay can. Besides looking totally outrageous, the 3D in CF63-1/3 is utterly original. If you're fighting in front of a bunker and happen to pound through a door, it's there you'll fight. It's just like Buckaroo Banzai said, "No matter where you go, there you are." Each level is actually a real working model. Although our version had only one working camera, it's evident that total 360 degree movement is in effect. Therefore as you move in and out, the playfields, which include objects around the entire circumference, rotate. The textures are gleaming with promise and the polys look solid and seamless. As for the characters themselves, it's obvious to me that the new clay in town are quite a bit better





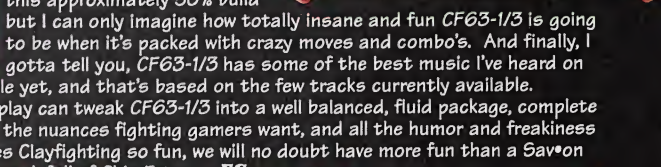
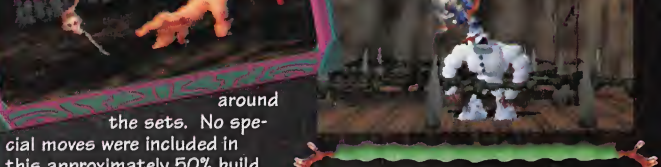
ZOOM OUT...
AND BE
AMAZED!!



SUMO SANTA...
BUTT POWER!



CAREFUL POOCH,
THAT'S NO SNOW
CONE!!



than the remaining few from 1 & 2, especially (drum roll please) Earthworm Jim and Boogerman! Seeing them in all their 3D goodness makes we want 32 or 64-bit versions of each more than ever. Not to take away from the rest of the bunch (you don't wanna take anything away from Sumo Santa, especially consumables), they're all crafted ingeniously and feel almost alive as they walk

around the sets. No special moves were included in this approximately 50% build but I can only imagine how totally insane and fun CF63-1/3 is going to be when it's packed with crazy moves and combo's. And finally, I gotta tell you, CF63-1/3 has some of the best music I've heard on the console yet, and that's based on the few tracks currently available.

If Interplay can tweak CF63-1/3 into a well balanced, fluid package, complete with all of the nuances fighting gamers want, and all the humor and freakiness that makes Clayfighting so fun, we will no doubt have more fun than a Saviour clerk in a truck full of Chia Pets. **ES**



Stuffed as usual...

PREVIEWS!
By E. Storra

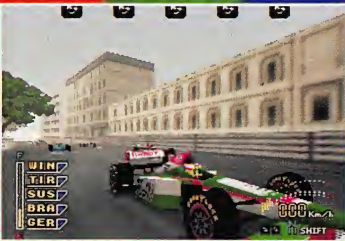
TITLE TOP GEAR RALLY
COMPANY ROSS (FOR KEMKO)
ETA SUMMER '97
GENRE OFF ROAD RACING

It's been awhile since we've heard from *TGR* but here it is, as it will appear to some degree when it's finished. Some of you may recall some far more spectacular shots which we ran some months ago. Obviously those builds were conceptual and were likely running on a fridge sized SGI. Nevertheless *TGR* looks, well, like every other N64 racer. Lots of square edges and clean yet blury textures. The deciding factor will of course be frame rate, size, control, and tuneage... stay tuned.



TITLE HUMAN GP/NEXT GEN
COMPANY HUMAN (FOR UBI)
ETA NOW JPN-US TBA
GENRE FT RACING SIM

Just as we've put away our *Mario Karts*, having fully explored every nook and granny, in comes a racer of another sort... *Human Grand Prix: The Next Generation*. Coming to the US via UbiSoft, HGP features a full roster including historical drivers. The game is host to some nasty re-draw but looks clean otherwise and features selectable weather and 16 true-to-life courses. We'll have a review next month along with info on Ubi's other N64 titles.



TITLE MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
COMPANY OCEAN
ETA JULY
GENRE ACTION/ADVENTURE

Judging by these latest screens (of the actual game in motion), *Mission: Impossible* looks like it takes full advantage of the Nintendo 64's 3D power. Realistic texture mapping brings an air of realism to the game which consists of third person shooting and puzzle/strategy elements. Also, take note of the cameras and the distance you can see, without a trace of the now famous N64 fog. We can't wait to get our hands on MI.



TITLE DUKE NUKEM
COMPANY GT INTERACTIVE
ETA SUMMER '97
GENRE CORRIDOR

Having travelled thousands of miles on a last second download these *Duke Nukem* grabs indeed look a tad grainy. In the end however I'm quite sure we'll be enjoying a squeaky clean N64 version of this, one of the finer corridor marches out there. Of course that's just my opinion. I could be wrong.



GAME FAN

SPORTS



**SOCCER, SOCCER, SOCCER!
THEY JUST KEEP COMING!!
FIFA64 & GOAL STORM
REVIEWED INSIDE!**

**SPRING FEVER!
VR BASEBALL '97
TRIPLE PLAY '98
BOTTOM OF THE 9TH 2**

**PLUS:
KONAMI'S 1ST N64
BASEBALL GAME:
POWER PRO BASEBALL 4**

GAMEFAN

SPORTS



JOE KIDD

KIDD'S CORNER

Let's talk a little Pac-10 hoops for a bit, shall we? I don't know why there is so little regard for the talent out in the West, but after this year, it is clearly evident that the Pac-10 can play with the best of them. I mean, 4 teams in the Sweet Sixteen is a pretty amazing feat, and all of them could have legitimately advanced to the Elite Eight! I gotta give it up for my Cal Bears; predicted to finish anywhere from 6th-9th in the Pac-10, they exceeded everyone's limitations and played hard to the bitter end, finally losing to the NCAA's winningest basketball coach in history. In fact Lute Olsen, Arizona's (Final Four as of now) coach even said that Arizona played its best basketball of the season in their losses to both Stanford and Cal... just goes to show you how close Cal was... even without NBA-bound Ed Gray. To my boy Ben Braun, you are now The Man!

All of you that read my humble little column know I can talk on this issue for days (I'm wearin' a Cal basketball jersey, for cryin' out loud), but I don't want to neglect everyone else now... So let's talk a little Golden State Warriors... nah, just messin' with you... I do have to pick Kentucky to win it all though, because even though the talent is pretty even among the 4, I have to side with Pitino... and I'll go with Minnesota as the dark horse... I must admit I had chosen Kansas all year... Well, the NBA is winding towards the playoffs, and there have certainly been some shifting in Powers... The Lakers have taken a slide without their big man in the middle, while Miami continues to roll even when Zo was out of the lineup... Atlanta and Portland are continuing to rise, while the Pacers and Kings start to fade... Will the Utah Jazz and the Mailman win their first Western Conference finals? They are poised to capture homecourt advantage, and are an amazing 30-3 when playing at home, second to no one, including the Bulls... Speaking of the Bulls, anyone catch Rodman doin' a little WWF? I heard it was pathetic, although I gotta say that his movie with Van Damme does intrigue me... For all of you fantasy basketball freaks, I know the trading deadline in March marked a sad day to us all, but anyone that is interested in doing a league with me next year can write or e-mail me, and we'll get it on—prizes on the line!

Can you believe this Gordy Howe, I mean he has no concept of the term "retiring with dignity"... he wants to make a one-game comeback into hockey AT THE AGE OF 69! It may get postponed I hear, but if it doesn't, sports talk show host Jim Rome has built a \$4000 bounty to the guy that takes Gordy out—ouch! Still on hockey, let's give it up for Boston University... BU went up against mighty Michigan, who was heavily favored and ready to become the first team in NCAA hockey to bring home back-to-back titles in 25 years, lost to BU, 3-2 before a crowd of 18,000... So long, Wolverines! (But hey, at least you won the NIT's...) Spring is here, and baseball has begun with a bang... Atlanta sends away Dave Justice, Marquis Grissom and Jermaine Dye! Personally, I don't know any of the players they got in return... Oh, except for that guy Kenny Lofton... What a stud! Seems to be the way of a lot of teams these days, trading big names and big salaries for more role players... Hard to be profitable with these big sports franchises, believe it or not... A couple of my sources have told me of how franchises have actually lost millions, despite selling out every game! That's scary.

Oh... another thing that's scary... EA and Nintendo just got together and announced that EA will introduce all of their sports games on the N64! Scary how good those are gonna be. Remember what I said... The best basketball game within the next year will be on the N64.

Comments? Questions? Drop me some mail any time. Peace — Out. JK

Joe Kidd can be e-mailed at: rlee@metropolismedia.com

VIEWPOINT



FIFA EA
NINTENDO 64

FIFA64 is the best American soccer game on the market. Its smooth graphics and playability are very balanced, in combination with all of the options and realism—EA's signature. The most impressive aspect to me however, are the phenomenal background sounds and music. It really recreates a playoff atmosphere and definitely changes your excitement for the game. Great camera angles available too. Fast-paced fun.

G C P M O 93
9 9 9 10 8



GOALSTORM KONAMI
PLAYSTATION

More of a soccer game for beginners, not to take away from it at all. It is not a difficult game to learn; anyone could pick up the pad and play. Konami has stuck to simply the basics with this one, but has done everything well. Could use better sound and music, and could get into more options and detail, but the simplicity is refreshing, and the game is perfect for just plain, old action, with no hang-ups, glitches or load time.

G C P M O 84
7 9 9 6 7



NBA LIVE '97 EA
SATURN

Although a fan of NBA Live '97, this particular platform does not do the game justice. The game is fun to play, but not when there are much better ones on other platforms. Live Saturn did not stand out and grab me in any one area—not graphically, gameplay-wise, or musically. To me the best part about it was that you could play a season with stat-tracking, and that you could play up to 10 players... I'm too spoiled by others.

G C P M O 71
6 7 8 7 7



POWER PRO BASEBALL KONAMI
NINTENDO 64

There's good news and there's bad news: The good news is that this game is great and shows a glimpse of the future of baseball games—the bad news is that it's only available in Japan. PPB is a wonderfully fun and addicting game. Very user friendly, and introduces quite a few new, groundbreaking options and features to the game of baseball. It has fantastic control, and the timing is accurate. Quickest 9 innings around!

G C P M O 94
8 10 10 8 10



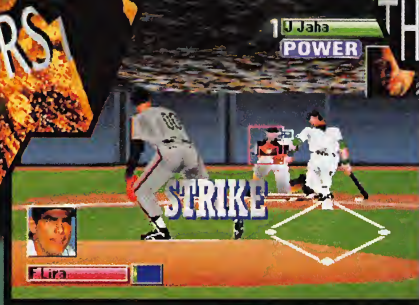
VR BASEBALL VR SPORTS
PLAYSTATION

For VR's first inhouse sports game: not bad, but back to the drawing board. Baseball fans are baseball fans, and will have fun playing this regardless of how I feel, but I'm used to getting a lot more detailed action, colors and textures more prominent, more sound effects and music, and better overall playability and timing. I don't need to be inundated with distractions, but when there's certain things missing, they're sure noticeable.

G C P M O 64
7 7 7 5 5

PREVIEWS!

STARBUSS



THE PERFECT GAME



THE SPARKS WILL FLY

THIS IS WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE UPCOMING RELEASE OF BOTTOM OF THE 9TH FOR THE PLAYSTATION... WELL, AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT KONAMI IS SAYING ABOUT IT. APPARENTLY, THIS NEW VERSION HAS BEEN TOTALLY REVAMPED, WITH A 3D STYLE BATTING INTERFACE, MORE STADIUMS TO CHOOSE FROM, MORE CAMERA ANGLES, MLBPA LICENSE, NIGHT GAMES, EASY TO USE SEASON MODE AND MUCH MORE. I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED AS THE GAME DEVELOPMENT PROGRESSES!



HHEY GOLF FANS! HERE'S THE FIRST SHOTS OF EA'S PGA '97. PGA WILL INCLUDE MANY OF THE TOP PLAYERS ON THE TOUR (DAVIS LOVE III AND PETER JACOBSEN SHOWN), AS WELL AS 3 OF THE MOST CHALLENGING CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES AROUND IN SAWGRASS, SPANISH BAY AND SPYGLASS TOO. LOOK FOR A COMPLETE PREVIEW IN OUR NEXT ISSUE! UNTIL THEN, STAY OUT OF THE ROUGHS.

EA EVENTS!



As we all know, Electronic Arts has been the pace car for all sports games since the birth of *Madden*. The thing that has really set them apart is their grassroots approach to the industry—getting involved with the athletes, sports figures, coaches and commentators—people who are sports, and getting them involved. This year EA sponsored a series of groundbreaking events and tournaments that caught the attention of sports celebrities and fans alike. Among some of the events was the 3rd Annual Madden Bowl in New Orleans, 3 days before the SuperBowl. Destination: Planet Hollywood, French Quarter, where guys like Eddie George, William Floyd, Ki Jana Carter and many more took part in the competition and festivities. Simultaneously, up in San Jose, California, EA introduced their new wireless remote game controller at the NHL All-Star game that allowed fans in the



audience to play on the Jumbotron from their seats! 2 Days prior to the game, Slapshot Shootout took place at San Jose Live!, where stars included Eric Lindros, Tony Granato, John Vanbiesbrouck and others, who got together for a little fun off the ice. In the same month, EA was hitting the college ranks as well with their 5th Annual East/West Shrine College Football USA '97 Tournament, where guys like Jake the Snake of ASU and Steve Sarkisian of BYU battled it out on the video grid iron. Meanwhile Team EA traveled to 40 different college campuses, running mini-tournaments for over 1300 participants, finalists of whom would duke it out at the Campus Cup in New Orleans. As you can see, it's already been a busy year for EA, and you can bet they were taking notes the whole time, and you'll know when you play their '98 line of sports games and other future lines to come!

FIFA 64

SOCCER

Well for all of you sports fans that couldn't wait for an EA title to come out on N64, your wish has finally been fulfilled. EA has released its #1 soccer game onto the 64 bit platform, and looks like it has certainly outdone its predecessors.

As good as the other FIFAs were, they just couldn't overcome some of the limitations inherent of the CD format. Now, with the cartridge-based capabilities provided by the N64 system, gameplay is as smooth as can be, and the tempo upbeat. I was beginning to notice a startling pattern in EA sports games; one that put an emphasis on realism and statistical features (which I loved), but at the expense of gameplay, and often times graphics as well.

By utilizing the N64, EA has manipulated an advanced gaming system with faster CPUs that allows the player(s) to have maximum satisfaction in speed and gameplay. What a pleasant surprise to play such a fast-paced soccer game, with smooth, twitch responses.

Along with advanced hardware, comes an advanced AI. In past FIFAs, the defenders mirrored just about every move you made, therefore there was no way to shake defenders at all; no matter how good a defender is, this just isn't possible. Computer players defend and



DEVELOPER - EA

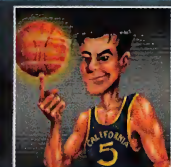
PLAYERS - 1-8

PUBLISHER - EA

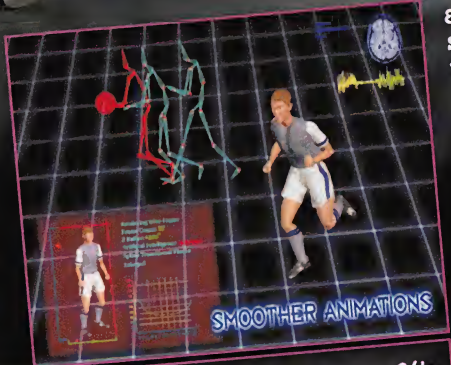
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD
Major foot
action!



Motion Blending: FIFA Soccer 64's extremely clean graphics and smooth animation are apparent in the 22 real-time rendered players.

attack much more realistically, and have an overall better understanding of spacing and leading other players. In addition, timing and movements are precise and believable.

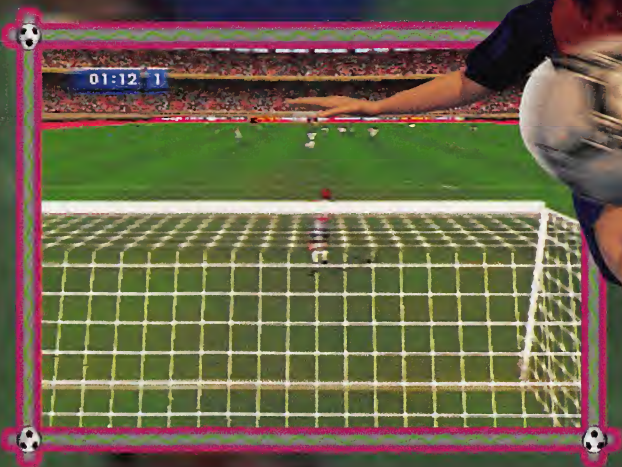
There are more play options than ever before: low passes, high lobs, dribble, run, speed-up, slide tackle, hard tackle, curve balls, one-timers, rainbow kicks, bicycle kicks, diving headers and more. You can execute one of 3 set plays at any time, and hide which play you are running from your opponent. FIFA has 8 unique camera angles, plus a bonus picture in picture feature that brings you close-ups of all the action. Choose from 6 team formations, and 5 different team strategies from Attack Mode to All-Out Defense. EA uses Motion Blending Technology to render 22 real-time players that



are at the control of your fingertips via analog-controlled action. FIFA has 6 different leagues, and 160 different teams. Unfortunately, this version of FIFA does not have the Indoor game option, but the improvements that have been imple-

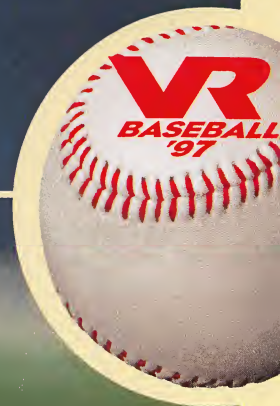


mented make this version so good, you hardly miss it. Overall, EA has done a fantastic job in recreating an exciting soccer environment. The music, chants and cheers are more authentic than ever before, and actually add to a heightened flow of adrenaline. Most music and sound simply provide accompaniment or entertainment, but the sound in this game puts you right into the arena with a playoff flair. Have fun with this one! JK



VR BASEBALL TIP **10**

IF YOU DON'T MIND GETTING KNOCKED AROUND, SWITCH TO BALL CAM AND SEE THE GAME FROM A PERSPECTIVE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.



Officially Licensed by
Major League Baseball™ and
Major League Baseball Players
Association™



Check out VR Baseball '97 at www.vrsports.com

Check out the official Major League Baseball™ web site at www.majorleaguebaseball.com

PLAY THE FIELD!

NEW! VR BASEBALL™ '97.

THE ONLY REAL-TIME 360° 3-D BASEBALL GAME!

Now, play Major League Baseball™ from any position or perspective. Because, this next generation game has a **Virtual FieldVision™** 3-D camera that allows you to dolly, pan and zoom to and from any point in 3-D space. Now, see the action bigger and closer than ever before from either a first person or third person perspective. To bring this Major League Baseball™ 3-D world to life, real-time motion capture was combined with polygon players producing quick, smooth, life-like baseball moves.

After 3 years of internal development and a total commitment to quality, VR Sports delivers a winning roster for the '97 season:



Instant access to pitch selection, speed and control for unlimited plate locations without menus. Total bat control for power, contact, bunt and pull-hitting without tipping your hand to your opponent.



Hit and run, tag up, steal, stretch out a double or execute a squeeze play. It is up to you because you can control all of the baserunners while simultaneously controlling the batter.



Super-fast Season Play mode with top 10 or full stats. Plus, mid-season All-Star voting and game.



Four uniform options per team including updated colors and team logos for 1997. Plus, four play options and three difficulty settings for the skill level most challenging to you.

Plus, a true physics model controls velocity, rotation, gravity and air friction for true flight, bounce and roll for varying surfaces like AstroTurf, grass, dirt and fences.

VR Baseball '97

Try it. It's new. It's different. You may never go back to your old game again.



Play baseball in a true real-time 3-D world with unlimited 360° views and motion captured polygon models for all players.



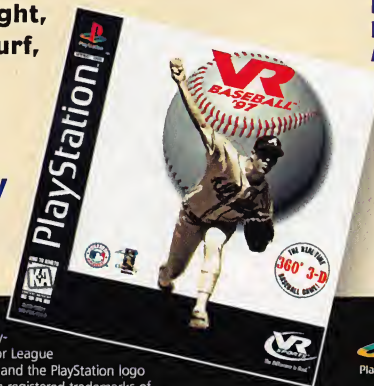
Over 700 Major League Baseball™ players with updated stats, rosters, uniform styles, logos and inter-league play for '97.



In-stadium scoreboard tracks scores, pitches and stats in real-time while the big screen in-stadium television broadcasts live.



Play day or night games in all 28 3-D Major League Baseball™ stadiums including three new stadiums: Atlanta, Anaheim and Oakland.



The Difference Is Real.™

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COMING SOON!!!



DEVELOPER - KONAMI
PUBLISHER - KONAMI
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - MULTI
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



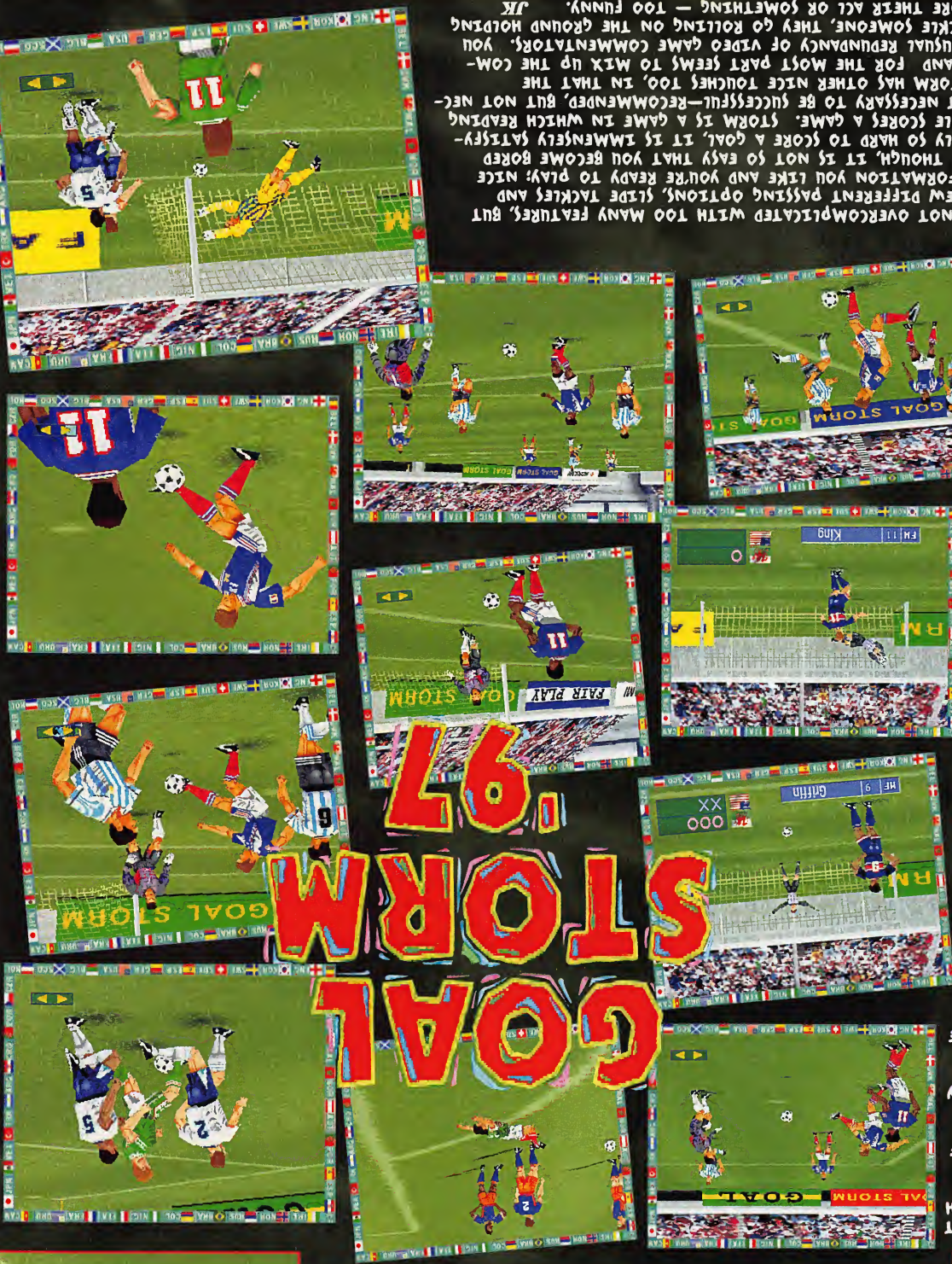
JOE KIDD
 You'll get a kick out of this one.

STORM DOES JUST WHAT IT'S NAME IMPLIES, WHICH IS TAKE YOU BY STORM... WELL, LET'S SAY HEAVY WINDS. THIS GAME IS REMINISCENT OF OLDER 16-BIT GAMES—IT JUST HAS THAT ROUGH, PIXEL-EDGED FEEL TO IT, YET IT'S STRANGELY ADDICTING. OF COURSE, ALL OF US HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF PAST GAMES, ALTHOUGH NOT THE MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED GRAPHICALLY. OPTION-WISE OR ANYTHING ELSE, THEY JUST HAD THAT CERTAIN SOMETHING THAT MADE IT A HECK OF A LOT OF FUN TO PLAY.

THE ANIMATION IS FAIRLY SMOOTH, BUT THE DETAIL OF THE PLAYERS IS NOTHING SPECTACULAR, AND WHEN THE BALL, IT SOUNDS MORE LIKE A TYPERWRITER THAN A GUY RUNNING DOWN THE FIELD. HOWEVER, THE THING THAT MAKES STORM SO GREAT, IS THAT IT MAKES US SOCCER NOVICES FEEL AS IF WE CAN REALLY PLAY THIS GAME. PART OF MY SOCCER FRUSTRATIONS stem from dribbling all the way down the field, JUST TO HAVE THE BALL STOLEN AND KICKED ALL THE WAY TO YOUR SIDE AGAIN. SOMETIMES I COULD GO HOURS WITHOUT EVER PENETRATING THE OPPONENT GOALIE BOX, BUT THIS GAME, ALTHOUGH LESS REALISTIC I'M SURE, ALLOWS THOSE OF US WHO REALLY HAVE NO KILL OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE GAME TO ACTUALLY EXCEL FOR A WHILE—ISN'T THIS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT ANYWAY, TO HAVE FUN Dribbling TO BE SOMETHING YOU REALLY HAVE NO REAL LIFE SKILLS IN OTHERWISE?

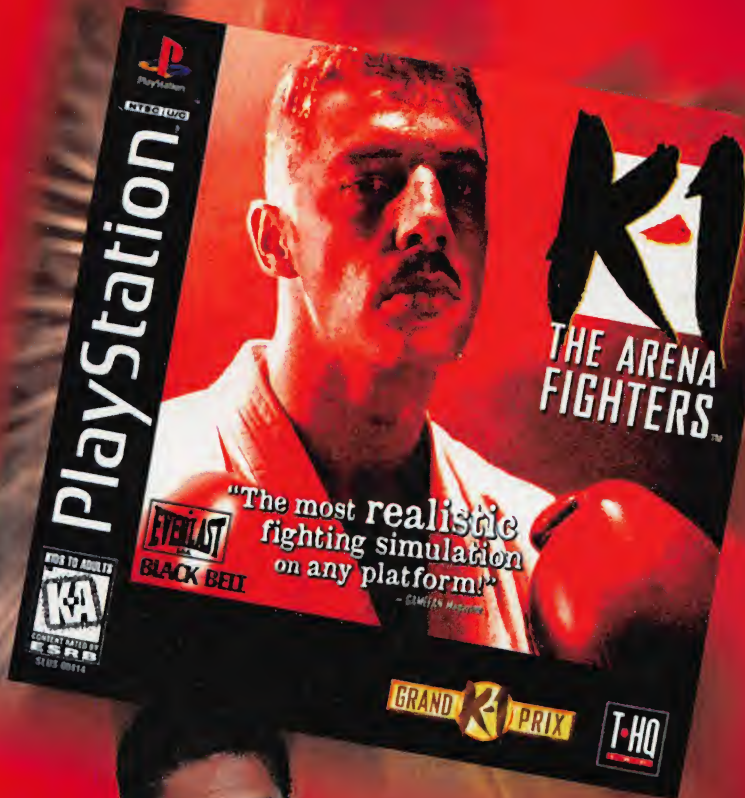
STORM IS ABOUT THE BASICS, NOT OVERCOMPLICATED WITH TOO MANY FEATURES, BUT HAS A SHORT PASS, LONG PASS, FEW DIFFERENT PASSING OPTIONS, SLIDE TACKLES AND STEALS. YOU CAN PICK WHICH FORMATION YOU LIKE AND YOU'RE READY TO PLAY; NICE AND SIMPLE. AS EASY AS IT IS, THOUGH, IT IS NOT SO EASY THAT YOU BECOME BORED WITH IT. TO ME, IT IS USUALLY SO HARD TO SCORE A GOAL, IT IS IMMENSELY SATISFYING TO BE ABLE TO GET A COUPLE SCORES A GAME. STORM IS A GAME IN WHICH READING THE INSTRUCTIONS REALLY ISN'T NECESSARY TO BE SUCCESSFUL—RECOMMENDED, BUT NOT NECESSARY. MY KIND OF GAME! STORM HAS OTHER NICE TOUCHES TOO, IN THAT THE ANNOUNCER IS VERY ANIMATED AND FOR THE MOST PART SEEMS TO MIX UP THE COMMENTARY A BIT AVOIDING THE USUAL REPUNDANCY OF VIDEO GAME COMMENTATORS. YOU SHOULD SEE WHEN YOU SLIDE TACKLE SOMEONE, THEY GO ROLLING ON THE GROUND HOLDING THEIR KNEE LIKE THEY JUST TORE THEIR ACT OR SOMETHING — TOO FUNNY. JK

GOAL STORM '97



Full Contact Contest

WIN A COMPLETE MARTIAL ARTS GYM SET COMPLIMENTS OF K-1 THE ARENA FIGHTERS FOR SONY PLAYSTATION AND GAMEFAN MAGAZINE



FIRST PRIZE (5)

A copy of K-1 The Arena Fighters for the Sony PlayStation. (5 winners)

SECOND PRIZE (10)

1 year subscription to Black Belt magazine and an Everlast Gym Bag. (10 winners)

CONTEST RULES

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter mail a standard postcard containing your name, address, phone number and age to "K-1 The Arena Fighters Contest" c/o T-HQ, 5016 North Parkway Calabasas, Suite 100, Calabasas, California 91302. Limit one entry per Participant. Entries must be received by May 15th, 1997. All entries become the exclusive property of T-HQ/GAMEFAN magazine (sponsors) and will not be acknowledged or returned. Sponsors assume no responsibility for lost, mutilated, late, ineligible, incomplete, postage due or misdirected entries. Drawing will be held on or about May 20th, 1997.



GRAND PRIZE (1)

One complete set with 60-lb. heavy bag, leather speed bag, leather bag gloves, Everlast robe and boxing trunks. (1 winner)



BLACK BELT™

NBA LIVE '97



You know that Mr. Kidd certainly gets excited every time a new hoops title crosses his desk, and lo and behold, NBA Live '97 for the Saturn is here. Now everyone knows by now that when you get an EA sports game, you're gonna be stacked to the rafters with every option imaginable. Well, the story's no different this time, as Live is stacked with options like on-the-fly playcalling, a Stat Menu that includes Team, Player, User, and League Leaders, a Strategy Menu with offensive and defensive sets, 8 different camera options, Trade and Create Player options, full Season play, complete rosters with all of this year's rookies and much more... as always. EA is second to none in providing choices and options for the sports connoisseur.



Now, my problem with the Live series has never been with the options it included, but rather the graphics, gameplay and the complexity of its interface. The characters are motion-captured, but honestly, the graphics are not much to talk about being on the Saturn platform. They, as expected, have declined slightly. Sluggish gameplay is not too much of a problem on the Saturn version, but the players have that skating-on-ice feel rather than the desired hitting-the-hardwood feel. Any attempt at a steal is comprised of sliding into the man with the ball, and pressing the steal button as many times as you can before he gives up the rock, where in reality it would be foul city (unless of course you're the Knicks).



The interface is not as complex as the PlayStation's, and the load time seems to be

shorter. I may be imagining it, but whatever changes they've made, they've worked for me. No matter how many times I played the PlayStation version, it took me forever to just get the darn game started. I could never remember what button to push, under what category, and so on. Saturn's is much more straightforward, and moves along quicker, much to my relief, because it started to be a real buzzkill when it took me 10 minutes to find how to get to the tip-off! Imagine the feelings of inadequacy that built up...

Overall, this game is one of the better hoop games on the Saturn platform, but with Playstation and N64 out there, this one won't get much PTI. See ya. JK



DEVELOPER - EA

OF PLAYERS - 1-10

PUBLISHER - EA

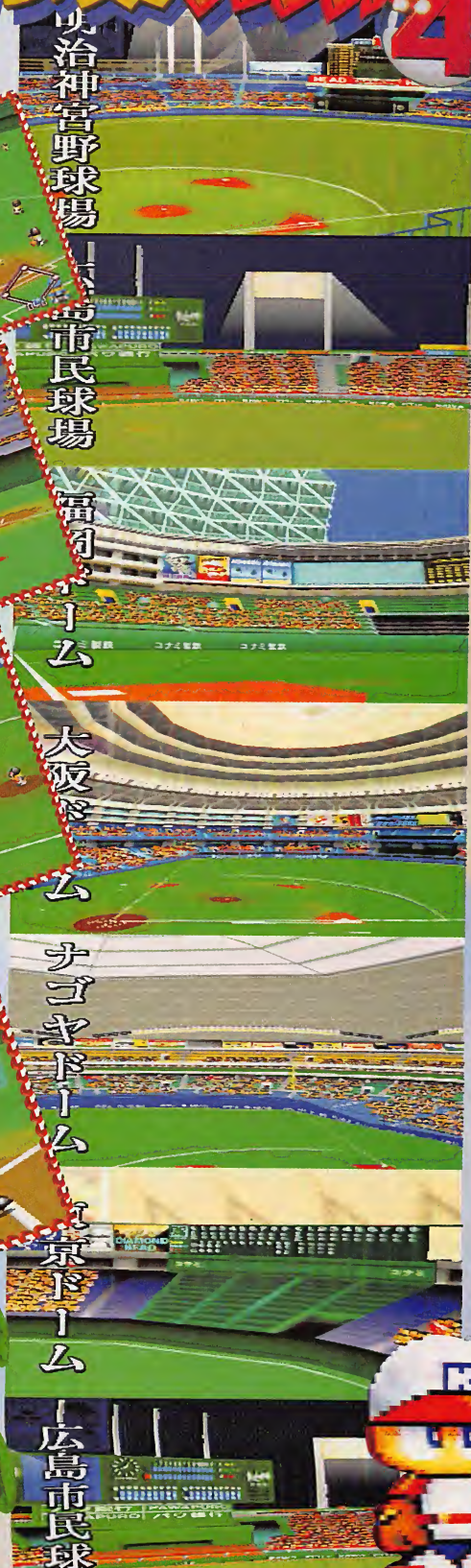
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD
THEY'RE DOWN
BIG, BUT EA'S
A SECOND
HALF TEAM.



GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

NINTENDO 64



DEVELOPER - KONAMI
 PUBLISHER - KONAMI
 FORMAT - 64 MB CARTRIDGE
 # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
 DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
 AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



JOE KIDD
 Baseball's on a roll!

Well baseball fans, there's good news and there's bad news. The good news is that baseball games look as if they are coming around—the bad news is that *Power Pro Baseball* for the N64 is only in Japan. However, we should all rejoice nonetheless, because games like this show what's on the horizon in baseball.

If you saw the March issue, you saw GF review *King of Baseball*, the cute one, also from Japan. Well, if you didn't know any better, you could swear (but don't) that *Power Pro Baseball* is the exact same thing as *KOB!* It has the same "cute" characters, miniaturized little guys that resemble the old field-goal-kicking Super Joes. It has a similar type of Practice Mode in pitching, batting and fielding that translates into elevated levels of attributes once gametime rolls around—a feature I love. But my initial observation on the difference between the two, is that *Power Pro's* graphics are not as clean as *KOB's*, but *PPB's* gameplay and control are tighter and more precise.

Batting takes on a different system than *KOB*, one that was very friendly to me. You see, I'm notorious for having absolutely minimal skill in putting the bat to the ball in virtually every baseball game—at least with any regularity that is. In *PPB*, they've implemented a system that gives you a batter-controlled cursor to mark your sweet spot. The thing that makes it so different though, is that the cursor moves in an arc pattern, thus eliminating occasional "slips" into random batting positions—i.e. getting overly excited over a curve ball and wildly thrusting the cursor into the upper-righthand region. This arc feature, coupled with the analog stick of the N64 gives you smooth, methodical control over the swing. What's more is that you can also choose the Power Hit option. This is an on-the-fly option that you can select which will make your batting cursor smaller in size (harder to hit), but if you get ahold of it, it's got some juice! It was difficult to hit in this mode, but after I found my rhythm, it was lights out baby.

As your pitcher starts to feel fatigued, he gets stars around his head, and begins to wobble a bit—another cute feature. In the bullpen you have a handful of pitchers for each club, and each pitcher has a couple of specialized pitches that are guidable once the ball's been released. As a pitcher, you are equipped with PIP screens on 1st and 3rd base, and can actually see when the man on base takes off...

One of the more impressive features of this game was the non-stop commentary. This on-the-fly play-by-play made the game much more real to life, and enhanced the live atmosphere it tries to capture.

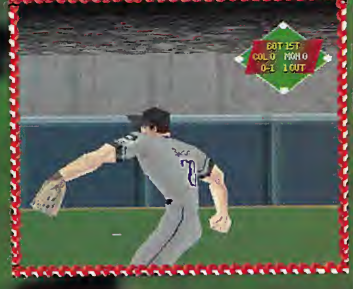
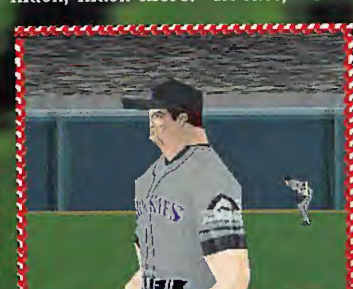
Once again, this cute genre has succeeded in capturing our hearts and more importantly, our gaming interest. Baseball fans and non-sports fans alike ate this one up despite the glaring irony that "darling" and "chew spit," "adorable" and "dugout," "precious" and "jock strap" just don't belong in the same sentence. You're bound to fall dizzily in love with this game. **JK**





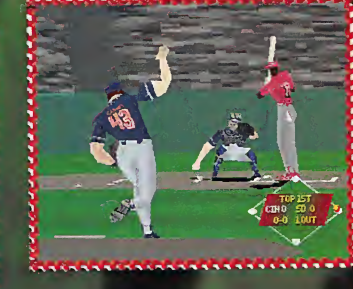
Ok, here's the scoop on VR Baseball. In a day and age where it is simply not enough to put an emphasis on just gameplay, or just graphics, or just flat-out realism in sports games, VRB just comes up a little short in all three. I'm talking about my gut instinct, my calculated and researched conclusions, and my overall opinion as well. It just has that feel, and I tell it like I see it.

VRB has done so many things well, but there are just a few too many distractions for me to support this game whole-heartedly. Granted, VRB has gone to great efforts to capture this game and has succeeded in many ways... Details like 4 different jerseys for each player, outfielders shifting to defend strengths of specific batters, a warm-up period for each pitcher in the bullpen, updated player stats throughout the game, cries from the hot dog vendors in the stands, and much, much more. In fact, I real-



ly like VR because they have a lot of great ideas in their sports games that I've played, but just don't crack the proverbial "Top Ten" yet. You can tell they put a lot of thought and effort into their games, but they're missing the glue in some areas, forgot to sand down the edges and round the corners.

One thing that really detracts from this game, and baseball games in particular, is the lack of commentators. Having play-by-play guys really move this traditionally slow sport along, a must for a game that takes over an hour to play, and if you're talking about playing a season... forget about it! I know they're trying to achieve more of an "at the ballpark" kind of feel, rather than a televised broadcast, but it doesn't work with no commentary, no music, or anything to pump the blood a little. Gameplay is not bad, but the frame rate makes you a little uneasy in its occasional choppiness, and the graphics, although highly detailed in some respects,



just aren't smooth and realistic enough for today's standards. Today, consumers are just looking for a lot more.

To be honest, I had quite an interesting game that I lost in the bottom of the 9th when my man Dennis Eckersley gave up the game winning homer. I did stay interested enough to play an entire 9 innings, but unfortunately, it's just not a game I would look forward to playing again. Not that it turned me off, but it's just not a game that made any kind of an impression on me, and struck no chords. Admittedly, it takes a pretty phenomenal baseball game to accomplish that, being that I'm not an avid fan of the sport, but it can be done. I think VR has really brought some great things to the table, and has established a solid foundation to build from, but need to go back to the drawing board with this one, and take advantage of what's been a field of mediocrity in sports games for the last couple of years. JK



GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW



DEVELOPER - VR SPORTS

PUBLISHER - VR SPORTS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SPRING '97



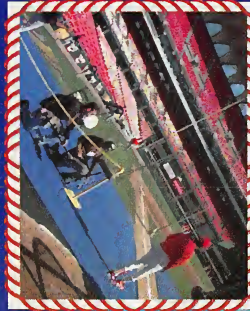
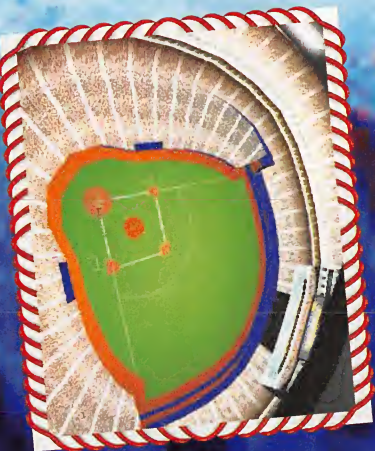
JOE KIDD
GOOD FROM FAR...
FAR FROM GOOD

MINNESOTA TWINS

EA's taking it to the next level...

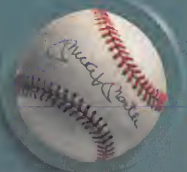
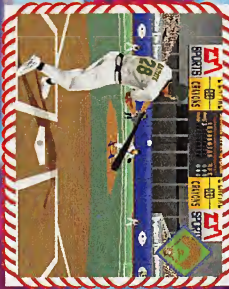
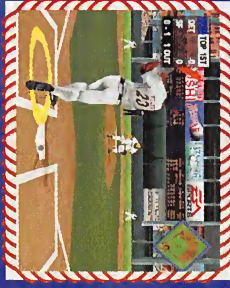


TRIPLE PLAY 98



Well, it finally looks like we're gonna get a good baseball game this year. EA has spent its usual tireless efforts, paying attention to the finest of details in recreating the true environment of Major League Baseball. After a long drought of quality baseball games, EA looks to erase those memories of boredom and mediocrity, with *Triple Play '98*. The most notable improvements in the *Triple Play* series are found in the new animations. In fact, EA claims

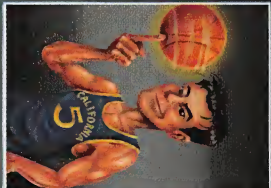
"You should see something new and cool each time you play." Whether the pitcher's grabbing for the rosin bag or the outfielder is climbing the wall to steal the home-run ball, every detail has been tediously noted and animated. Of course, everything in an EA Sports game is authentic and licensed, and wait till you see these 3D real-time stadiums! Every little luxury box, every light fixture, every scoreboard... everything is real to life... you may even see the popcorn you dropped in section 104 last weekend! Each player shows off their signature batting stance and swings, and boast their names on the back of their authenticated jerseys, so clear you can read them AND their numbers—don't forget the alternate jerseys for Thursday and Sunday night games! Gameplay and AI has been fine-tuned from last year, and the dial commentary is right on top of the action, the interplay of which really enhances the game. How's this for more detail... Pip screens for on-base runners? New skin textures with mustaches, goatees and beards? Shadows move as the sun moves over the course of the game?!! Well, other than the fact that I couldn't hit a single ball, it was a very enjoyable sneak preview... even the music jammed... let's keep our fingers crossed. **JK**



PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA
 PUBLISHER - EA
 FORMAT - CD
 # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
 DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
 AVAILABLE - N/A



JOE KIDD
 Look what's waiting in the on-deck!

QUARTER CRUNCHERS

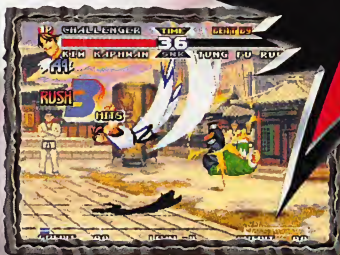
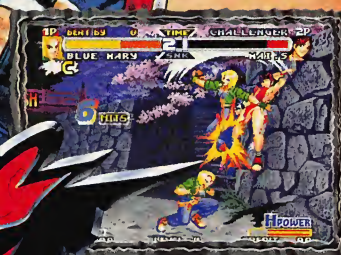
The only things certain in life are death and taxes... and Fatal Fury. Started as the Neo-Geo's entry into the booming fighting game craze, FF has had six different arcade incarnations and is the most released fighting game on home systems to date. While I've played all the games in the series, from the original Fatal Fury to the newest in the legacy, Real Bout Fatal Fury Special, I must admit it wasn't until Real Bout Fatal Fury that I really became that keen on the game. That said, I think Real Bout Special is

definitely the better of the two. RBFFS upgrades the gameplay, engine, and systems of RBFF, and includes secrets and smaller details that weren't present in the previous game.

Playwise, many of the smaller gameplay elements have received upgrades or changes. The most notable is the line-way system, a sort of '3D for a 2D world,' which has been changed back to the old two-plane format as opposed to the three-plane format used in the last two games. The roster of characters



Real Bout SPECIAL



has been beefed up, with the return of old favorites (Tung Fu Rue, Laurence, Cheng, and Krauser and Geese) as well as secret 'evil' versions of Andy, Mary, Tung, and Billy. With all of the characters present, the number of backgrounds are sparse at only eight, although each changes from morning to night as you fight.

Music and sound effects are solid fare, but the crowning jewel is definitely the announcer. After you start your game, you are greeted by this 'trying to be hip and enthusiastic' guy saying, "Hey! How's it going dude? Choose your favorite character!" From there,

he says little things before each match and when you lose. This is SNK's traditional wacky text put to speech, and a lot of clear, good sounding speech at that. I dare anyone to hear the select screen intro and not smile.

While I know I'll get a scolding for saying this, I think Fatal Fury has become one of SNK's less-important series. That said, FF is an institution in itself, a high-quality and well-produced game series that even today is one of the top names in the genre. While I may not appreciate it to its full extent, I know FF fans will be more than pleased. S

19 FATAL FURY STARS CLASH IN THE ULTIMATE CONFLICT!

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB...

SMART PADS!!



**PLAYSTATION SAKKARA™ AI
CONTROLLER**



**SATURN SS MAJORIS™ AI
CONTROLLER**

Designed with the player in mind! Ergonomically shaped for maximum comfort.

Five levels of programmable rapid fire for each button!

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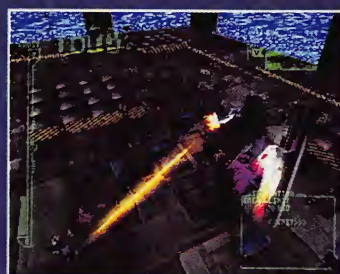


NEWS

FROM'S LATEST VENTURES

The company famous for the *King's Field* adventures has two new titles ready for inspection at the Tokyo Toy Show; *Armored Core* and *Shadow Tower*. "From" recently announced these two titles as well as stating that there will be no more *King's Field* sequels; they feel that they've taken the game as far as they can. But no matter, for these two titles will likely propel "From" to even greater stardom. Let us delve into the world of *Armored Core* first...

Armored Core is best described as a 3D combat action game with an interesting 'robot making' option. This simulation is scheduled for a Summer release, with a US release to hopefully follow. The gameplay is an interesting slant on the usual 'mech games, with players accomplishing missions by building different types of robot. Mr. Kawamori, the game designer, expressed great excitement that players will be able to further their progress by building robots from over 100 million different patterns of parts and equipment, including their own colors and decals (like in *Rage Racer*). Furthermore, all the missions are 3D/action/shooting with a first-person view so that the player can experience being there just like in real life... or as real as a twelve-level polygon dungeon can be. "We think we can help foster simulation activities among players," stated Mr. Kawamori rather cryptically, but we see what he means; players can save their robots and battles it out with other human players, and "From" seems to be trying to establish a new style of gaming in which players can have a fun assembling robots and then placing them in a cyber zone to kill each other (both in hand-to-hand and ranged combat) again and again. Let's hope "From" took inspiration from *Virtual On* and not *Robo Pit* before designing this one...

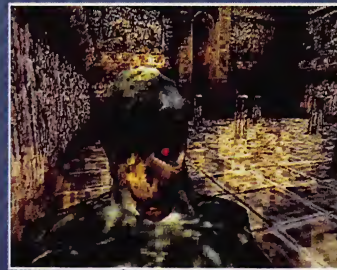


Also coming from "From," is *Shadow Tower*, to everyone's amazement, this is going to be a 3D dungeon RPG!! Yes, really! This is the first in what "From" hopes will be a series of RPGs under the banner of the *Continental Saga* (note that both names are working titles). Planned for a Spring 1998 release, *Shadow Tower* is a 3D real-time polygon dungeon bash intended to take players weaned on *King's Field* and transport them to the next level of gaming excellence. In order to create an even more realistic effect, "From" has employed a much more detailed polygon engine, meaning vertigo-inducing falls and huge chasms are more accurately portrayed than before. "From" stated that "one of our main objectives is to express a sense of loneliness or fear by not only reducing BGM but concentrating more on the sound effects for each scene. We are striving to develop entertainment an RPG that can eliminate the 'just a game' concept, based

on an incident that happens in the Devil's world." Whatever the enigmatic "From" may mean, the game sure sounds cooler than a snow-man's wet bits. Here's a snippet of what the story is about:

Long, long ago, there was a King who ruled a continent after conquering many countries, due in no small part to his brethren; the 12 Black Knights. The 12 Knights had unsurpassed power beyond human beings, and the King employed a mystical artifact known as the Crown of Ocellus decorated with 12 shining stones. After the death of the King, the 12 Knights vanished and the country was again divided to small countries. The King's castle was demolished and only the Crown remained there. The legend of the demolished castle and the power of the Crown grew over the decades that followed. Then, many years later, a man happened to obtain the Crown. When he found that the Crown belonged to the legendary King, he decided to go into the catacombs of the castle to find the 12 stones that had been lost... Perhaps not the wisest of moves, but it certainly leaves the way open for a pantaloon-soiled dungeon fest in glorious 3D.

What "From" has also tried to steer away from are the 'traditional' elements of RPGs (and I don't mean locking yourself in a darkened room with a 20-sided dice). "From" has said that they are "going to



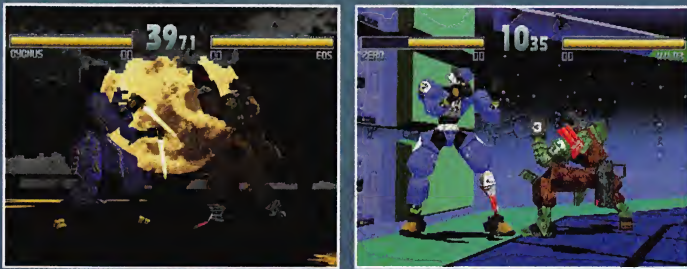
avoid elements of numerical values such as HP, MP, and levels. In other words, we will avoid using numerical parameters for characters in the game. The game will not have an automatic recovery system, not only from the damage caused by an opponent in a fight but also the loss of energy caused by attacking or using spells, as the player progresses in the game. Also, we will eliminate unrealistic situations, such as receiving gold when you beat a monster. Our new intention is to create intelligent opponents, so that we may be able to adjust the non-player characters (the opponents will vary greatly, depending on the behavior of player). We are trying to create a world in which a player must apply common sense..." A tough job indeed, and a game that GameFan is anxiously waiting to play.

ZOOM RETURNS WITH ZERO DIVIDE 2

The game with legendary delays, *Zero Divide 2: The Secret Wish*, is now nearing final completion, and still looks to be a *Tekken* 2-style 3D polygon battle bonanza. However, in order to pull itself from the mire of other 3D beat-'em-ups, *Zero 2* will have asymmetrical stages, four walls with different attributes (like electricity or sheer drops), and increased dramatic character animation. Sounds interesting. Also of note are the sheer number of stages (there are more than in any other fighting game so far, the reason being that they're in Virtual Reality), and the most interesting (and downright odd) stages are briefly described below. Note that all details are subject to change, tweak and removal...



So, as stages go, *Zero 2* has the most exciting. Such delights will include the Mechanical Stage with its distorted shape and a three-layered wall which crumbles when characters collide with it. Then there's the tom-tom-tastic Jungle stage surrounded by electrical



wire, a Biological (!) stage which (apparently) is hexagonal and resembles a bee, a Rocky stage which looks very 'rural China' with an oblong ring on top of a cliff, a Japanese stage lit by the light of the cyber moon and lastly... the pink rice-cake stage. Hmmm. No word on the gameplay itself, but until we receive further information, feast your eyes on these all-new shots.

KONAMI SWAMPS THE CONSOLE MARKET

Fine purveyors of classic console titles for many a year, these Japanese giants are set to continue their video game prowess with the release of a load of great-looking releases, all of which are very different from each other.

Looking very cool at the moment is *Other Life Other Dreams*, a role-playing style PlayStation adventure. This dungeon hack is looking extremely extensive, with 3D dungeons to explore that change internally every time you venture inside. Another greatly anticipated feature is the fact that you can meet demonic enemies in battle and then coax them into actually joining your party. The way this occurs is by, er, collecting their eggs, because as any Demon hunter worth his salt knows, Demons raised from eggs are more easily swayed into the service of humans. So during this adventure, it becomes imperative to collect these eggs, take them home, keep them warm in a specially constructed hutch, and actually raise them. Most odd. More (less bizarre) facts known about *Other Life Other Dreams* include magical fusion or merger capabilities between characters and the fact that magic is kept in special bags, and must be removed from the bag before use, and is in a special order which you can change (this apparently affects the game in some unknown way).

Okay, I know you'll want to more about those Demon hatchlings, so here's more juicy gossip for those demonic farmers amongst you. When the Demon reaches maturity, it becomes yours to control, but due to their perverse nature, they tend to wander off. Keep them in check by delving into your bag and producing a demonic collar. This creates a tight bond between you and your little lucifer, and the collars come in two eye-catching colors; Blue and Red. From this we imagine that two different types of demon can be controlled at once. Even with the collar however, these nasty chaps tend to do their own thing; their own individual AI allows them to question your orders and the likelihood of them obeying you is displayed in five levels.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF POITER'S POINT?

Taken from the Japanese *Poi poi*, this actually translates as "Disposing of things and tossing them out unsparingly without a second thought", so Konami wisely chose the more catchy *Poiter's Point* for this very, very odd PlayStation battle game. Your character comes to an arena armed with nothing, and must defeat the opponent by using whatever objects are scattered about the stage. Up to four people are able to play simultaneously, and the winner is the last person standing. Now apparently, this is the sport of the future (because of, y' know, sparse resources and everything), and encourages you to grab any items you can in order to beat your foe into submission. Different items appear in different stages, and a special machine replaces items during particularly long battles when items run out.

Finally comes the *Salamander Deluxe Pack Plus* for the PlayStation and Saturn, a triple-pack bundle of goodness for all old school shooting fans. This has the space-ship shooting festivals of *Salamander*, *Salamander 2* and *Life Force* in one bulging CD pack. Aside from getting three great shooters, fans will also receive new CG openings and a demo. Hold onto your smart bombs for that one. We'll have more on all three games shortly, as they're all being

shown at the forthcoming (at the time of writing) Tokyo Toy Show '97. Check back with us in a month's time, and we'll also inform you of these fine titles along with rumors of a certain *Castlevania 64*...

SATURN CATCHES A VIRUS

Hudson Inc., Sega Enterprises and Avex DD Inc have joined forces to co-produce *Virus*, a hybrid adventure game for Saturn that will further narrow the gap between films and games.

Virus is set in the 22nd century, when mankind has developed a virtual world called the Cyber Network where people can transfer both their consciousness and physical body into cyber space. The virtual world has been constructed to replicate the real world. You play the part of Serge, an investigator in cyber space who goes in search of his brother, Leon, after he loses contact with him. Leon was last seen trying to eliminate a killer virus from the Network, and Serge's quest will require him to unravel the mystery behind the virus and discover its true purpose.

Virus' graphics will be a mixture of CG and hand-drawn animation: CG for the backgrounds and animation for the characters. This is supposed to reflect the game's narrative of humans living in a mechanical world.

The three companies involved want their collaboration to be seen as a model for future multi-company games. Avex DD/Favorite Blue will provide the music, Hudson is handling the animation and Sega are in charge of CG. *Virus* is set for an August release date, and will come on 3 CDs.

CAPCOM HEROES TAKE ON MARVEL'S BEST

Capcom's sequel to *SF vs X-Men* will include an all new character entitled Norimaru. The name was selected by a 14 year old boy from Kyoto who won a competition on the weekly comedy program Gabaku. The character has extremely strange moves, such as a silly walk, slipping up on a banana peel, and a throw where he wraps his bag handle around his opponent's neck, pulls it back, then lets it snap in their face! He also has a 'henshin' move where he changes poses and clothes many times for a multiple attack! Norimaru is a big super hero fan, and at the start of a round he often takes out a camera and snaps a shot of his opponent. He also has a special move where he asks his opponent for an autograph! I swear I'm not making this up! It's not certain that Norimaru will be in the final version, but we hope so!

THE TOYS TAKE THEIR TURN

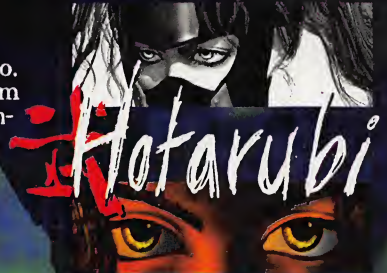
The Tokyo Toy Show was held between March 19th and 23rd at Japan's biggest exhibition grounds, the "Big Site." With over 135 companies showing in excess of 35,000 toys, and an estimated attendance of 100,000+, the TTS ranks among the biggest of toy shows worldwide. And unlike TTS shows of the past, this year most of the game companies decided to display only at the Tokyo Game Show, so it was almost exclusively toys.

The Tamagochi easily took center stage at the show. It's more popular than ever! The little eggs have now evolved into other forms completely, including cuddly toys and even portable phones. The newest, version 3, is available in 3 types: Forest, Ocean, and Heaven! Looks like it's going to be the year of the Tamagochi. Heck, there's even a Tamagochi pen pals club.



BUSHIDO BLADE

Bushido Blade is an excellent example of why I love Square. It's not a perfect game; in fact, it's far from it. But with Bushido Blade, and every 32-bit product they've released thus far, Square impresses by delivering products that were just a few months before thought nearly impossible. With Tobal No. 1, they formed a team of expert 3D fighting game designers (Dream Factory, made up from previous members of Sega and Namco), and created something truly original, with the highest resolution seen on the PS thus far. Final Fantasy VII... well, that goes without saying. Not only did this title destroy every other 32-bit RPG before it, but it truly re-defined the genre. They even re-released the classic Final Fantasy IV and, um... Well, they added CG and the ability to dash! (wait, strike that...) And now Bushido Blade, beyond creative. Not content with just making another 3D fighter, Square's new team, LightWeight, designed a new concept from the ground up.



NO TIME LIMIT... NO LIFE BAR... NO RULES

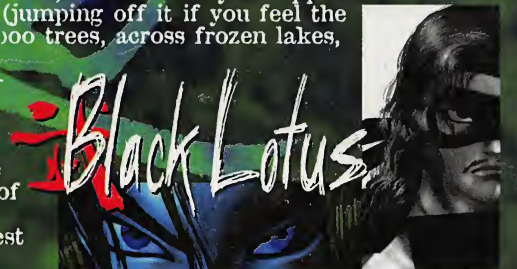
Life bars, time limits, restraining environments—normal aspects found in nearly every fighting game—gone. In the attempt to make a fighter that's a bit different from the norm, LightWeight decided to focus on an aspect rarely tried in non-sports gaming: They based BB on reality. Why have life bars in a fighting game? If a body part becomes slashed, shouldn't it become useless? And what about the backgrounds? Isn't it time for the areas you fight on to become more than just pretty backdrops? In



Bushido Blade, there's one huge area you can fight through for the first main battles, an area that's as big as a small town.

It's so cool to slash your opponent in the leg and/or arm, and watch him struggle towards you. And as this game is based on realism, one hit kills are the norm. The battles are much more strategic than most fighting games, parrying strikes and knowing when to slash back is important, but even more important is knowing when to run away. These aspects allow for battles that can last an instant, or an hour. You can make a fast kill, or run from your opponent across bridges (jumping off it if you feel the need), through bamboo trees, across frozen lakes, and up small walls.

While there are borders, the areas you can explore are amazingly huge. This freedom is one of the best aspects of BB, and one of LightWeight's greatest accomplishments.





In keeping with the reality idea, the only way to "win" is quite admirable. Samurai (for the most part) are an honorable bunch, and you must keep that honor in mind if you hope to see an ending. Bushido is an honor code for Samurai warriors, something you should follow. Don't hit an opponent in the back, don't wait with your blade ready as he climbs a wall after you, and certainly don't strike as they're talking.

If you fight with no honor, your only reward is a small parting haiku, leaving you without seeing any of the bosses, or the CG ending. But of course, this works both ways. If you fight the good fight, and respect your opponents, one of two very cool endings per character is yours.

Initially 6 fighters can be chosen, all drastically different in appearance, but only truly distinct in speed and power levels. Before each fight, these characters can pick from 8 weapons that vary in weight and length, and most have special projectile attacks such as fans or shuriken. Similar to Tobal No. 1, there are only 3 attack buttons—high, middle, and low. Each of these, along with your parry and run buttons, allow you to execute almost every type of Samurai-style attack imaginable. And as in every game lumped into this genre, you must study the many different fighting styles and mini-combos, if you ever hope to overcome the foes that await.

The graphics in Bushido Blade are a mixed bag. The characters look great, and the backgrounds, well, they only look good if you keep in mind their size. The battlefield is actually so big, it's divided into sections that load as you approach. While the small wait time is a bit uncomfortable, the result is very cool. Each area is quite different, ranging from a large bridge to a grove of bam-



Mikado

boo trees (which can be cut down), and the graphical quality, while somewhat pixelly, is constant and easily bearable.

But what's a super-realistic Samurai fighting game without options? How many other fighters allow you change the setting from night to day, make the game appear black and white (classic Kurosawa

movies, anyone?), or give you the ability to fight in a first-person view?

How about a link-up play mode? There's even a Chanbara Mode that lets you practice on different fighters non-stop (opening new options if you prove to be a master), and a movie room where the CG endings you've received can be viewed at any time. And without getting into the optional environmental changes in the vs. mode (that drastically alter the gameplay), or the excellent music by none other than Ayako Saso, Shinji Hosoe and Takayuki Aihara (the folks behind the Soul Edge and Ridge Racer tunes), it's apparent Bushido Blade easily has more extras than any fighter ever would need.

Bushido Blade is a concept game, and a very good one at that. It's unique, clever, and ambitious... well... almost too ambitious. Not everyone will love it, but for those who are constantly searching for something a tad different (like me!), Bushido Blade is nothing less than amazing.

Utsusemi



P
PREVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - LIGHTWEIGHT

PUBLISHER - SQUARE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN



ORION

...I escaped! I'm back!! No more directing the web!! Hey... no... Wait, don't stuff me back in that box!

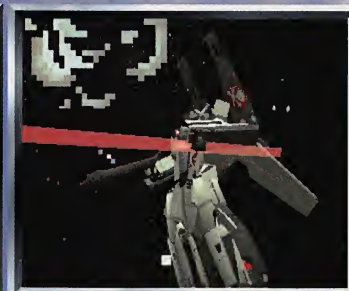
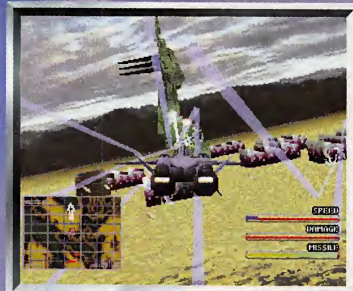
The luscious mid-boss Holkyoku Tsubame... sure, she may be 43, but she's hot!!

THE WEAPONS of BUSHIDO BLADE



Bushido Blade features some of the most impressive and... sharp weapons of ancient times, like the Katana, Rapier, Naginata, Kanazuchi, Nodachi, Boom Stick, Seiyo Blade, Seiyo Tsurugi, and Kishido Sword. Beautiful and deadly, each of these killing instruments of old are a rare sight today, most of which reside only in museums; permeated with dust and broken dreams.

Of course, all of them except one. Oddly shaped and drenched in mystery, the Boom Stick still eludes museum curators and treasure hunters alike. It's seemingly magical power, to be able to kill with a sharp, cracking sound, has given the Boom Stick an almost mythological shadow in people's minds. But, as pictures don't lie (see shot on left), neither do the statements given by Samurai during the Spanish Inquisition of 1512: "One boom and you're dead, sucka!" was what they said; one boom, indeed. The Boom Stick is today rumored to be in the hands of an assassin named Schwartz Katze.



▶ ONLY YOU CAN HELP THE GLAMOROUS MILKY DOLLS SING THE ZENTRADI INTO SUBMISSION!! ◀

MACROSS DIGITAL MISSION VF-X

Ah, *Macross*... what anime lover out there hasn't, at one time or another, dreamed of flying one of the fabled Valkyries, shooting down alien Zentradi scum, their courage and spirit burning from the encouragement of a Japanese pop idol singing a tender love song to paralyze the enemy? I am no exception, and I awaited *Macross Digital Mission VF-X* anxiously, wanting to sit behind the controls of my own fighter and fly among the stars with the big boys.

Unfortunately, my childhood dream crashed to the floor after a few minutes of playing *VF-X*. This is a perfect example of the age-old tradition of a bad game being built around a good license. I can honestly say that EVERY aspect of this game is flawed in some way. The control for each mode of your craft seems to be lacking something, most notably in fighter mode, where your Valkyrie reacts more like a floating camera than an actual aircraft. While the graphic quality is pretty good in some respects, there is horrible polygon pop-up and glitching (while flying along the ground in Batroid [robot] mode, polygons will suddenly appear right in front of you from out

to the 'Sound Project' Earth defense program. The Dolls are the only redeeming part of the game: They were actually designed by Haruhiko Mikimoto, the original *Macross* character designer. Now, I'm always willing to risk my life to rescue a cute Japanese pop quintet, but after a few levels not only did I not care about their safety anymore, I started to forget what the mission was in the first place. I can sum up the entire game like this: Fly for a long time, blow something up, fly for a long time, blow something up, repeat.

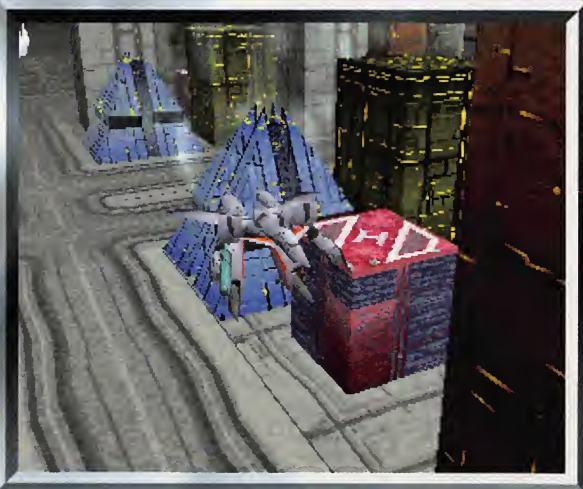
I was REALLY looking forward to this game, and that, along with the fact that *VF-X* doesn't deserve to carry the name *Macross*, is why I'm being so hard on it. If it was just some no-name flying game, I could toss it aside and forget about it. But it's *Macross*, and darn it, it deserves far better. S

nowhere!), accompanied by barren and uninspired stages. Even the music, which plays softly in the background, is quite arguably some of the worst PCM music yet to appear on the PlayStation.

Beyond all of those gripes, *VF-X* has one major flaw: It's just plain boring. Your mission is to save the Milky Dolls, an all-female band vital



Artwork © BANDAI VISUAL 1997



R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - BANDAI VISUAL

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - BANDAI VISUAL

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

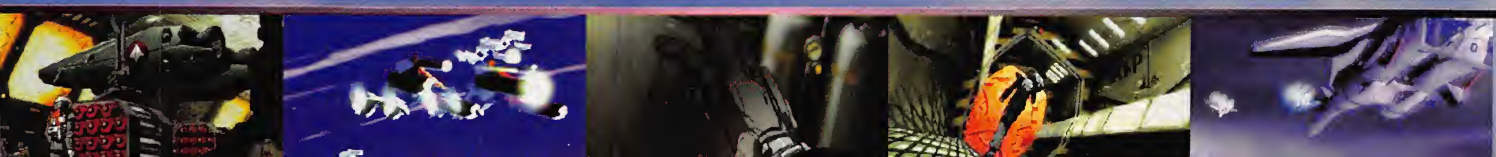
FORMAT - CD

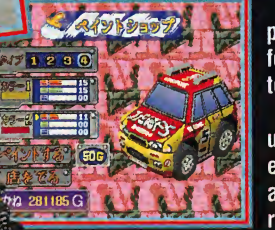
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



SHIDOSHI

Special Report:
UN Spacy pilot
quits, Milky
Dolls perish.





Yeah, I know, this game looks kinda silly, what with the penny racer-looking cars and the cartoony-ness of things. But, hey, try it, and you'll be hooked. *Choro Q2* brings you the same look, feel, and control of the first *Choro Q*, but with much more variety and depth. This time around, you'll have to drive through Choro Q Town to find the parts and body shops. The more you win, the more you can buy to upgrade your little racer, and beating all of the sprint races or the World Grand Prix allows you even more access to better parts and more tracks. You'll need to purchase different tires for different surfaces, as well. Eventually you'll be able to visit over twenty tracks (including 14 new tracks and 8 from *Choro Q1*) and you'll have your pick of around 60 (60!?) different bodies for your car, not to mention the many varying grades of tires, engines, chassis, brakes, steering, etcetera. And a visit to one of the two paint shops will add a personal touch to your



チロコQ2

CHORO Q2

vehicle (8 paint styles and thousands of color combinations are available, once you've been to the second paint shop).

Graphically, *Choro Q2* is pretty much the same as its predecessor: nothing overly spectacular, but more than adequate. What's strange, though, is how some tracks seem to zip along between 30 and 60 frames per second, while other, smaller tracks have difficulty keeping the frame rate above 8fps. Also, there's quite a lot of polygonal breakup, like all the polygons are just on the verge of falling apart, but once you've souped up your car a bit, you'll be going too fast to notice. The cars themselves are really cool (even brake lights!).

The music is quite varied, with a different tune for every track, ranging from pop rock to funk and jazz, all with a sort of happy, "toony" sound, and each fits perfectly. The sound effects are more than sufficient, and menu-wise, it's quite easy to get around, even without being able to read Japanese.

Where *Choro Q2* really shines, though, is in the play. The control is easy to pick up, but gets tougher and less forgiving as you get faster and further. Learn to powerslide in the easier first few courses, and you'll be much better off later on. All in all, *Choro Q2* is a great overall package—easy to get into, and lots of depth and replayability. It's easy to see why this is such a huge hit in Japan! **R**



DEVELOPER - TAMSOFT
PUBLISHER - TAKARA
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



REUBUS
This game is endless!!!

Superstition is the religion
of feeble minds...

KOWLOON'S GATE

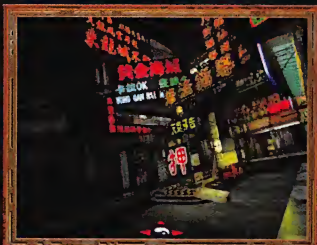
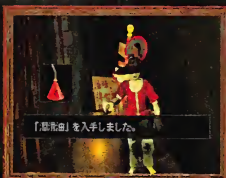


You must be the one Wei was talking about.
I'm Rich. And what do you want here?



After what seems like an eternity of waiting, Sony's most ambitious PlayStation project to date has finally arrived. Kowloon's Gate took almost four years to

complete, being in fact one of the first games announced for the console when it was originally launched a few years ago. After such a long time, I was expecting something pretty spectacular and thankfully Kowloon's Gate Project is just that. High-resolution computer graphics and real-time 3D environments create an incredibly realistic and atmospheric post-cyberpunk world that sucked me right in! Kowloon's Gate is a unique experience that will



The Walled City of Kowloon re-emerges!
Open the gate to a post-cyberpunk world.

challenge your imagination, plunging you into a futuristic world lost in a twisted reality.

Your adventure is set inside the walled city of Kowloon in Hong Kong. A vast sprawling gothic wasteland filled completely with derelict buildings, abandoned vehicles, flickering neon signs and stagnant sewers. Everything in this city is rife with decay. A dangerous place to be, yet home to many strange residents that live in the shadows. It is here that you begin your quest when you are called to appear before the 'Supreme Committee of Feng Shui' following an incident within the city walls. For those who don't know, Feng Shui is the ancient technique of reading the secret understanding of the currents of

power that run through the earth. This technique is based on the existence of four sacred beasts of Chinese mythology, each linked to the geographical features of north, south, east and west.

During the meeting, the high-ranked Feng Shui practitioners reveal that an imbalance between the elements of light and darkness has allowed the reappearance of the walled city. Your task is to establish Feng Shui within the city of Kowloon by locating the four sacred beasts.

Your journey through Kowloon's Gate relies on the successful navigation of two distinct and very different game modes: JPEG envi-



You have been sniffing around this place these days, haven't you?
Now that I have caught you, don't think you can just sneak away.



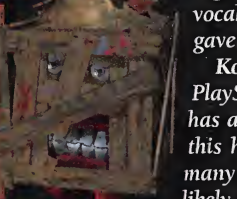
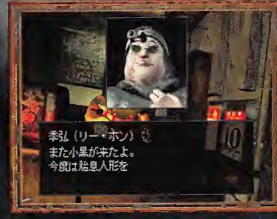
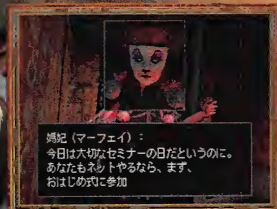
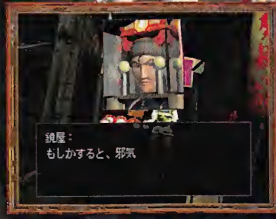
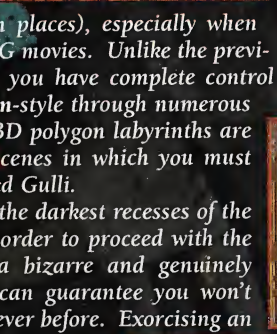


So you're the one who came to the walled city of Kowloon of the Yin World.
 Hmmm, then it means it's affecting the Yang World already.

ronments and real-time dungeons. The former consist of linked CG movies; pre-rendered FMV with limited freedom that some gamers may find disappointing at first. However, the sequences are incredibly detailed and smoothly animated and this is clearly one of the key attractions to the game. Negotiating these 'adventure' scenes is the main focus of your adventure, allowing you to gather information and items through conversation with the inhabitants.

After accomplishing specific tasks within each JPEG environment, you then proceed to the real-time dungeons. These catacombs look quite basic (lacking in detail and distinctly bland in places), especially when compared to the exquisite JPEG movies. Unlike the previously explored zones though, you have complete control in these areas as you move Doom-style through numerous rooms and corridors. These 3D polygon labyrinths are used to display the 'action' scenes in which you must purge the noxious spirits called Gulli.

Spirits make their home in the darkest recesses of the city and must be removed in order to proceed with the adventure. The Gulli are a bizarre and genuinely frightening collection and I can guarantee you won't have seen anything like them ever before. Exorcising an area of this evil involves a bizarre combat ritual whereby you evoke the Chi of your sword to remove a spirit. This blade has five Chi attributes (such as fire, water, etcetera), and every monster you face will be susceptible to at least one of these. The wrong selection will provoke the Gulli to attack, reducing your physical power, and the ensuing battle could result in your own demise. Although not as in-depth as the combat in more traditional RPGs, the battles are a unique and lavish



Humankind cannot bear very much reality...

collection of animated sequences, which complement the game perfectly.

Though you struggle alone through the Yin World, help is at hand from the local population. Persuading the locals to talk won't be easy, but eventually you'll be given a clue or maybe an item that can lead you to a new area. The characters in Kowloon are so bizarre it is hard to tell if they're good or evil, but through persistence their true natures are soon revealed. The important characters have been given voices, so pay particular attention when you meet them. They almost always have the key items and hints that you require. I must mention the character design which is superb. Try to imagine a combination of Blade Runner-style futuristic costumes mixed with Asian and gothic overtones. Kowloon's Gate features some of the most innovative characters seen in a video game for some time.

The music is superbly orchestrated with the eerily atmospheric soundtrack being a perfect match to the action onscreen. The voice quality of the main characters is another excellent addition; sounding crisp, clear and menacing. Sony employed the vocal talents of over 60 professional actors, who gave even more life to the folk of the Yin World.

Kowloon's Gate is certainly not your everyday PlayStation fare and I'm frankly amazed that Sony has a US release planned for this year. Translating this huge title (the game fills four discs with many, many hours of gameplay!) along with the voices is likely to be their toughest job to date. It'll be worth it as Kowloon's Gate is an epic title that you must experience. This is a unique outlook on the traditional mystery adventure with superb visuals and gripping scenarios that will keep you hooked. A classic.

JAPAN NOW

NAMCO MUSEUM

VOL 5



SHE'S A CUTIE! TAKE THE TIME TO ROAM THE HALLS OF THE MUSEUM AND YOU'LL RUN INTO MANY SURPRISES... INCLUDING THIS SLEEPY VALKYRIE!

PlayStation

Developer: **NAMCO**

Publisher: **NAMCO**

Released: **NOW**



Ah...we've finally made it to the 'O'. Volume 5, end of the line. I look back now and realize how cool this little collection is. Many of the classics in the Museum series are simply required gaming, and since these versions are always pixel-perfect renditions, there's no better place to find 'em.

Nameo Museum Vol. 5 is undeniably my favorite Museum of the bunch. There are just so many classics on this one—probably a couple you've never heard of, too. For example, *Baraduke*, a cult shoot-'em-up in Japan, didn't make it into too many arcades over here. It's a cool side-scrolling shooter where you clear simple 2-to-3-screen levels with a jet-pack and laser (fun, albeit primitive). *Metro Cross*, the other obscure title on Vol. 5, is the weakest of the collection, offering limited thrills. Near ancient graphics and repetitive gameplay make me glad I wasn't there the first time.

Now on to the good stuff. *Dragon Spirit* is great—always has been—and still supplies intense overhead shooting action. This is the coin-op 100% intact, so being a fan, naturally I'm more than happy. It's the same deal with *PacMania*: a perfect arcade conversion of the enjoyable isometric *Paeman* update (pardon the lack of excitement but this one's been played to death). Finally, on to the best game ever to hit the Museum collection:

Valkyrie Legends. Picture hot two-player simultaneous overhead action with glorious animation, scaling, parallax, power-ups, no slow-down, and fantastic music (even by today's standards). If you buy NM Vol. 5 for one game, this is it.

I haven't had the space to go in-depth about the museum structure itself (I'll leave the exploring to you) but suffice it to say it's as entertaining and informative as ever. With Vol. 5, the Namco Museum collection ends on a sweet note. Playing these games has been a humbling experience. Thanks for the classics. **G**



BARADUKE

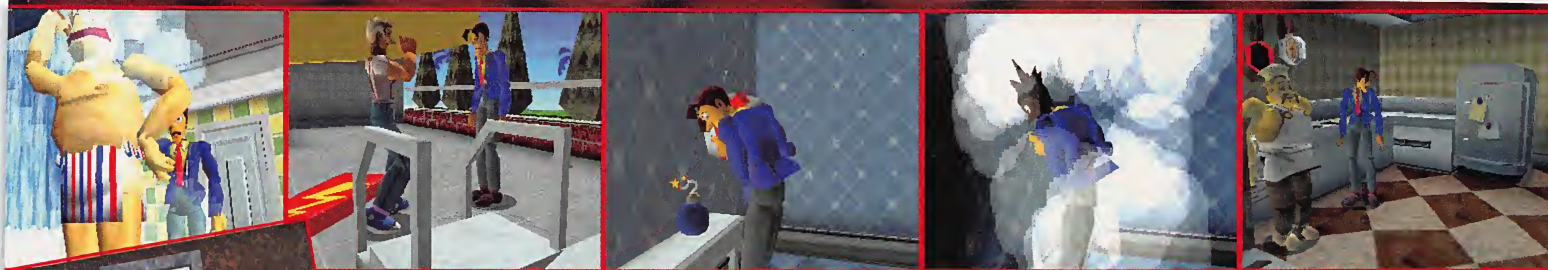


METRO CROSS



VALKYRIE LEGENDS



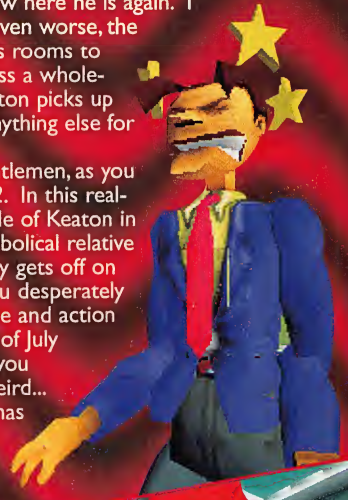


Napoleon has a thing for trousers... He also drinks Vodka... must be a mutt.

This being my second visit to Uncle Parkinson's (isn't that, like, a disease?) house, I'm beginning to wonder why Keaton keeps coming back here. Last time he showed up, the dope barely escaped alive and now here he is again. I guess stupid is as stupid does. Making matters even worse, the crafty Uncle P. has not only added many perilous rooms to his gargantuan mansion but must have run across a whole-sale shipment of TNT, because every time Keaton picks up the phone (hey, it was ringing) or just about anything else for that matter, he gets blown up.

It's all in a good day's work, Ladies and Gentlemen, as you brave the live sitcom that is *Welcome House 2*. In this real-time polygonal adventure you assume the role of Keaton in an effort to thwart the evil doings of the diabolical relative from hell, Uncle P. He actually gets off on watching Keaton suffer as you desperately attempt, through crazy puzzle and action gameplay to escape the 4th of July Holiday in one piece. And you thought your family was weird...

WH2, like the original, has splendid visuals rich with light sourcing, solid, well textured polys and quality animation. In



Home sweet home... I wish! Cars, a theatre, bowling alleys... And Keaton's trying to escape?

the space allotted I can't begin to cover all of the pitfalls that lie before our Gump-like victim, each followed by a full-on cliché laugh track, but trust me, they are many, and, at times, genuinely hilarious. The splendor of this game is most definitely its intricate design. What must have been months of clever programming is no doubt providing Japanese gamers with a healthy dose of comedy relief in between other such original titles as *Parappa the Rapper* and *Depth*. A diverse market is a rich one. Let's hope that wealth continues to spread state-side. **ES**

Uncle Parkinson's up to his old tricks, but this time... he's got TNT!!



WELCOME HOUSE 2

*Special thanks to Gust for providing us this ROM



I've had about all I can take!

JAPAN NOW



Let's face it, we're going to see a lot of *Mario* clones on the Nintendo 64... not such a bad thing when you think about it. Likewise, *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil* and *Crash* clones are sure to rock our world in the months ahead. It just so happens that the Nintendo 64 is ready-made for this type of game and so Epoch, like Konami and so many other third parties have patterned their game after the reigning king, *Super Mario 64*.

That said, don't get overly excited, *Doraemon* is no *SM64* but it does raise a question: If Epoch, with a fraction of the budget and half the time, can come up with a cool 3D adventure, what can we expect from the likes of Konami (with *Goemon 5* and *Castlevania*), Capcom (with *Ghouls & Ghosts*), and for that matter Nintendo themselves (with 2 *Zelda* adventures, and *Super Mario 64 Part 2*)? The future indeed, looks bright, if it would only speed up a little...

I suppose it's time to explain to you exactly what *Doraemon* is, so without further ado, here's the skinny. Quite simply, *Doraemon* is the Japanese equivalent of our *Mickey Mouse*. He's been around since the late sixties, has starred in piles of episodic TV and OVA's, and, once a year is privy to a full-on theatrical release. On a sad note, one



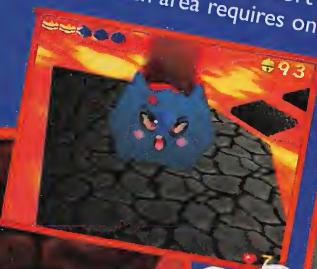
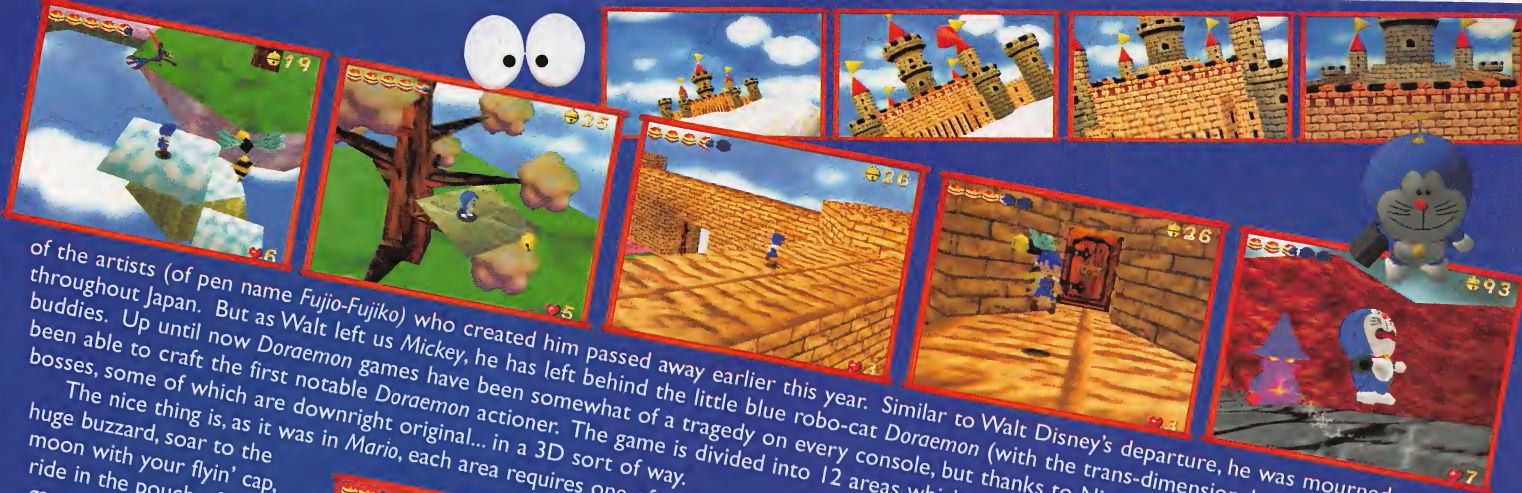
ドラえもん DORAEMON

JAPAN'S FAMOUS
FAT CAT FINALLY
MAKES THE GRADE
AS A VIDEO
GAME STAR



of the artists (of pen name Fujio-Fujiko) who created him passed away earlier this year. Similar to Walt Disney's departure, he was mourned throughout Japan. But as Walt left us Mickey, he has left behind the little blue robo-cat Doraemon (with the trans-dimensional pouch) and his buddies. Up until now Doraemon games have been somewhat of a tragedy on every console, but thanks to Nintendo's 3D-omatic, Epoch have been able to craft the first notable Doraemon game in a 3D sort of way.

The nice thing is, as it was in Mario, each area requires one of many tactics. In Doraemon you'll race in a car, swim through caves, fly a-back a huge buzzard, soar to the moon with your flyin' cap, ride in the pouch of a kangasaur, and, of course... platform!



CHOOSE FROM FOUR DELINQUENTS OR, THAT SUPER CAT WITH THE TRANS-DIMENSIONAL POUCH... DORAEMON!!

DORAEMON (DOE-RY-MON)

One of the few things Doraemon has over SM64 and, the game's greatest achievement, is the lighting. The light sourcing really took me by surprise. It's apparent throughout the adventure and, as is illustrated by the shots to your left, is gorgeous.

The play mechanics are simple run, jump, shoot and punch and the control is quite good as is the animation. This is a pretty smooth game for a 1st effort from a usually less-than-stellar developer. Doraemon's other 1-up on Mario is the available selection of characters. (cont'd)



KORONA



GYAN



NOBITA



SHIZUKA



SUNEO





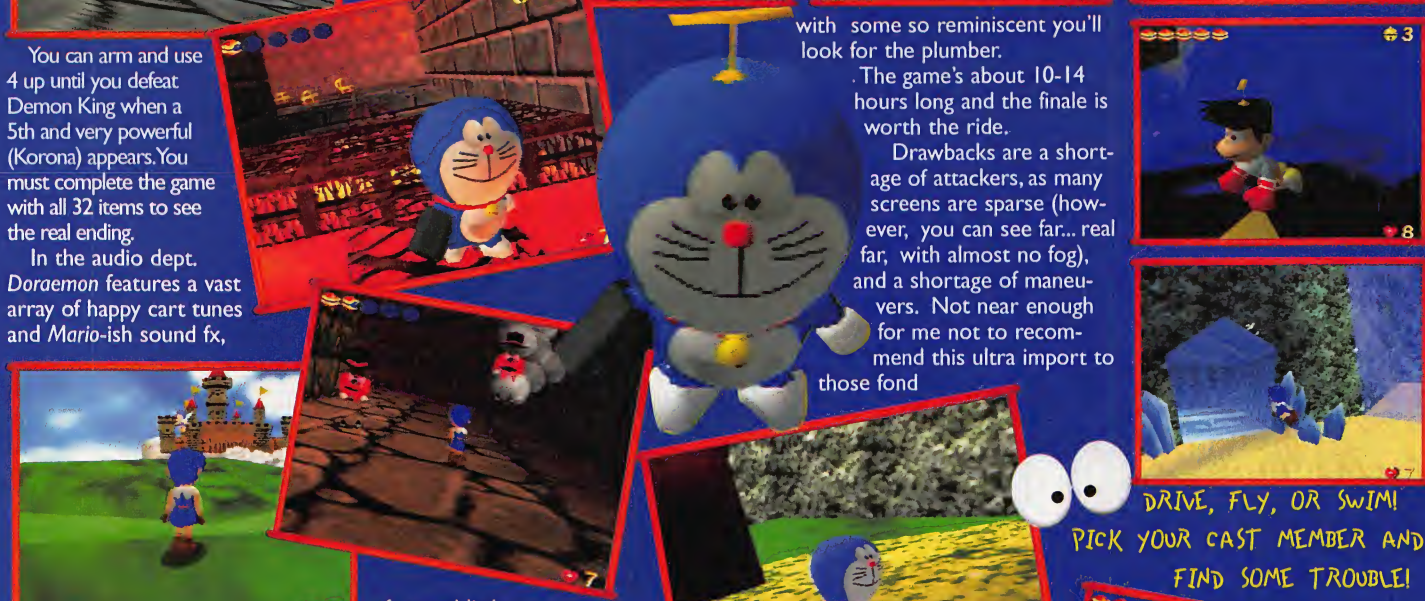
You can arm and use 4 up until you defeat Demon King when a 5th and very powerful (Korona) appears. You must complete the game with all 32 items to see the real ending.

In the audio dept. *Doraemon* features a vast array of happy cart tunes and *Mario*-ish sound fx,

with some so reminiscent you'll look for the plumber.

The game's about 10-14 hours long and the finale is worth the ride.

Drawbacks are a shortage of attackers, as many screens are sparse (however, you can see far... real far, with almost no fog), and a shortage of maneuvers. Not near enough for me not to recommend this ultra import to those fond



of crazed little Japanese characters (see *Hermie Hopperhead*, *Coolie Skunk*, etc., etc.) or anyone who's up for a toon-time 3D adventure. It's no *SM64* by a long shot but with the current void of US software and much of what's coming questionable, you really can't go wrong.

As for a US release... take a good look at our lil' friend here. Need I say more? **ES**



ASSAULT SUIT LEYNOS 2

MASAYA PRESENTS THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF A 2D CLASSIC!
MEMBERS OF THE 12TH SPECIAL FORCE! IT'S TIME TO SUIT UP!

The original *Assault Suit Leynos* was a futuristic scrolling platform/shooter on the Genesis that became a surprise hit for NCS Masaya when it was released in Japan in 1983. The tight game mechanics, innovative control and super-challenging mech action garnered *Leynos* (Target Earth in the Western hemisphere) a cult reputation that NCS later built upon with the excellent SNES pseudo-sequel,

Assault Suit Valken (Cybernator here).

Assault Suit Leynos 2 mixes elements from both previous *Assault* games, though as you would expect, it's much closer to *Leynos* than to *Valken*. Once again you control a heavily-armed mech stomping its way through a series of 2D environments, though this time you have even more hi-caliber weapons to 'pacify' the enemy forces. The control system is almost identical to the original *Leynos* (experts will be glad to hear that you can still use up and down to aim your weapon), though this time you start the game with jump-jets, shield and a dash-upgrades that had to be earned in *Leynos*.

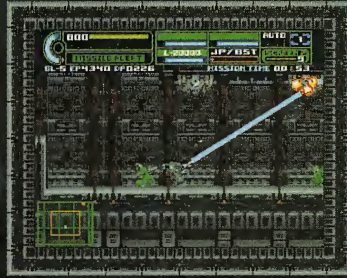
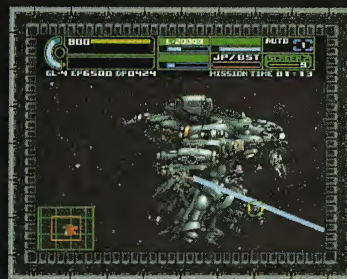
Like the control, the gameplay in *Leynos 2* remains very similar to its predecessor, with your mech facing a seemingly never-ending barrage of enemies that attack from both land and sky. The action is extremely intense (not as tough as *Leynos*, but still *rough*), and like *Leynos* you fight alongside a number of ally mechs, creating the feeling that you are participating in a battle

much larger than just you. Each level has a primary objective that ties in with the on-going story line (e.g. destroy a boss or protect a convoy) and once completed your performance is graded and items are rewarded accordingly.

As with the original *Leynos*, before you enter battle you are given the chance to customize your mech with the items you have earned. But here *Leynos 2* goes way beyond anything offered in *Leynos*. Not only can you pick your own weapons and items, but you can select new mechs, new armor, and special devices that give your mech extra powers (like advanced aiming or an improved radar system). There are all kinds of factors that must be taken into consideration when customizing your mech (weight, mobility, power) and certain configurations work better on certain missions than others.

Aesthetically, *Leynos 2* is competent, if a little basic. The scaling is smooth (each weapon either scales or zooms the screen to match its range) but the sprites get a little chunky up close. Still, the design of the mechs is cool, and the whole package is wrapped in a nice synth-funk soundtrack that should sound familiar to veteran *Leynos* players.

Overall, *Leynos 2* is a pleasing, if un-inspired, sequel that delivers solid action and remains true to the spirit of the original. And FINALLY I can skip through those damn story sections that frequently interrupt the action. There's no word yet on whether *Leynos 2* will receive an American release but it's a possibility. **K**



DEVELOPER - MASAYA

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - NCS

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



KNIGHTMARE
Auto-aiming is for wimps!

GAMEFAN UP-TO-THE-PICOSECOND UPDATE!!



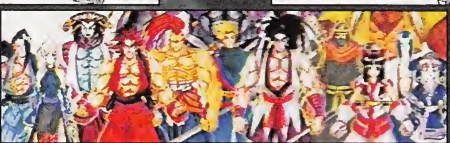
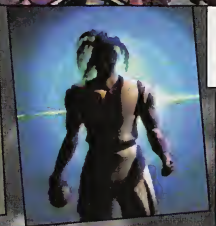
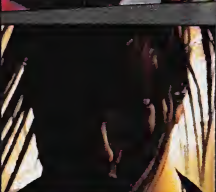
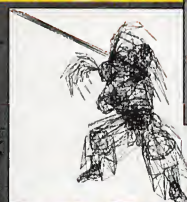
SAMURAI SHODOWN NEO•GEO 64



Wow, five minutes till we ship to the printer! Huh? Er... uh, yeah, I guess that was last night. Only at GameFan do we go over schedule to bring you such solid info as this, the first official shots of *Samurai Shodown Neo-Geo 64*! As you can see, the game is very early in development, with only four character models completed (The Genjuro model is complete but is unfortunately not shown in any of these shots.). There's little to no info available on SSNG64 yet, but rest assured we'll keep you updated.



Look at those wire-frames! POWER!! With this many polygons, SNK is king!! Yoshhaa!!



READER ART

This month's winner is Marian Churchland! Your Chia Pet is in the mail!!

GRABEETI EARS



A great game gets the royal treatment from none other than Adam Bennett from Aurora CO. Although Baby Mario's whining drove me to the point of insanity, I still love the little cretin. Nice work!



The infamous Dallas Ragon, renowned Wolfinger's Wall local boy, has turned out perhaps his best work ever with this great rendition of SD Street Fighter III. Hailing from the USNH in Naples, Dallas' hobbies include playing games, drawing, and jumping out of moving cars. Well, at least 2 of those.



The determined artist from Vancouver BC, Marian Churchland, has crafted an entire comic named *Silk* (see cover and sample page above). *Silk* has a tongue that would make Gene Simmons jealous and looks like a cross between El Viento, Ellis, and Morrigan. It's actually a pretty cool comic and is very well written. The *Shining* water color is nice to. We'll print more from Marian next month. Thanks, uh, dude?

GRID RUNNER CONTEST WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS AND MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

JUSTIN ROSE - CAMDEN, OH

FIRST PRIZES

ERICK CEJA - TORRANCE, CA

TED LATIN - LA GRANGE, KY

TIM PETTY - VENTURA, CA

SECOND PRIZES

JOSHUA HIGINS - CHARLOTTE, NC

JEREMIAH JONES - READING, PA

KOUA XIONG - STOCKTON, CA

PASCAL ADULE - BROOKLYN, NY

SHARON MITCHELL - ROCKAWAY BEACH, NY

BRIAN LAUGHLIN - RACINE, WI

MATTHEW BALL - ST. JOSEPH, MO

ROBERT PATRENETS - ROCHESTER, NY

DAN TU - SAN JOSE, CA

JOHN K. SINDERHOLM - EL CENTRO, CA

PEOPLE REALLY DO WIN!!



FROM A CAVE DEEP INSIDE AGOURA...



Bonjour, Postmeister,

Hello! Once again I've got a few concerns that I'd like to beg of your worldly advice. Lately I've become quite worried about the well-being of my Sega Saturn. I keep hearing about how 'inferior' its hardware is, compared to that of the PS and N64. I love my Saturn and I'm getting very concerned! Any words of wisdom on this matter?

X-Men vs SF is coming to Saturn?! Capcom, you just rule! Yes you do! Since it's planned to come with a back-up RAM cart, what're the possibilities of it being arcade-perfect? And where in the world is *MSH?*! Wasn't that supposed to come out like 2 months ago?

Man, is *Street Fighter EX* a mixed blessing or what?! The good thing: I get my beloved Guile back! Yes!! I am beyond exhilarated to see him again! And now, the bad thing: 3D! Three Dee! Polygon Street Fighters?! Oh the pain! Sacrilege! Sacrilege!

Oh, how I wish Guile were in *SF3*!!! How could they leave him out of their best 2D masterpiece ever (again)?! Why, Capcom, Why?

As you know, I am extremely dismayed at Guile's seemingly recurring absence in Capcom's new games, and so would like to start a 'Bring Back Guile' petition. So all you other Guile fans out there (I know I'm not the only one), e-mail me at guile@novlink.com. Thanks a bunch!

And lastly, before I go, a note to Nick Rox and the rest of the 2-D loving gang. I couldn't agree with you more on the issue of 2D games and Capcom. In my book, 2D games the absolute epitome of gaming greatness, and Capcom is just the god of 2D. It seems that nowadays people are just too blind to see the beauty and superiority of hand-

drawn art. If ugly, lifeless, blocky polygons are considered the wave of the future, then just shoot me now—I don't wanna be there when it happens. And bury my heart at Capcom's doorstep.

Well, thanks again for your time and attention. And if you'll pardon the expression (I know you're sick of it) you definitely are the 'Postest with the Mostest'! You guys at GameFan truly rule! Um, excuse my ignorance but what exactly are Waffle Chips, and what do they taste like?

Jen Seng
Westborough, MA

Waffle Chips? Okay, picture this: Part waffle... All chip! Tastes like a waffle cone. But you can't just go around bringing cones everywhere. You'd look retarded! So they took the cones, and, get this, broke them up into chips! Genius!

Words of wisdom? Well, my first piece of advice is not to take any crap from N64 owners. Those people have, what, seven games on their system, two of which are any good? People who live in fog houses shouldn't throw polygons, or something like that. As for PlayStation owners, well... Ummm.. I'll get back to you on that.

Ugh, how can you be excited to have THAT Guile? He has a SQUARE HEAD. His head is a SQUARE. Actually, now that I think about it, that's not such a drastic change. Anyway, as for his 2D return, doesn't look good... They're not bringing any old characters back for SFIII, and SF Alpha already has Nash. So I say your best chance is to hope that he appears in the next XM vs. SF game. Keep holding that candle.

Hey Posty!

How's it hangin'? I'm kinda, well...really mad. I heard *Final Fantasy VII* was gonna get edited. Why the heck don't they leave the game alone? It took such a long time for it come out, and now they want to edit it?! I don't get it. They do the same with anime. I was watching an episode of *Dragon Ball Z* and when Raditz was beating up Gouku, what was supposed to be blood was already scabs! Lame, huh? Anyway, I got some questions.

1. Last time I saw something on *Tales of Phantasia* it was a preview. You think you can get the guys to do something on it?

2. Who's gonna take Takuhi's place in Anime Fan?

3. You guys should make a magazine on anime. I think readers would like it.

So that's pretty much it.

Keep Kickin',
Tony Castro
Miami, FL

Sony says, "No changes will be made to *Final Fantasy VII*. We intend to completely preserve the game as Square meant it to be. And if that means a mature rating so be it." I hope that's true. But what about the house of ill repute? Hmmm.

1. I'll see what I can do. It's a bit old though. Unless you mean the rumored N64 version.

2.&3. I believe E. Storm, Nick Rox and Shidoshi (all mad anime fans) are working on expanding *Anime Fan* as we speak, and perhaps releasing a dedicated mag which would include anime among other things. More on that in the future. The all new *Anime Fan* is looking good and should be debuting in June.

Dear Postmeister,

I am a very loyal Nintendo 64 owner, but, first things first. To sum up the *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter vs Doom 64* war: In my opinion, it's *Turok* all the way. For instance, *Turok* is bigger and more wide open with a bigger selection of weapons. As for *Doom*, well, you can't jump, climb, swim, look up or down, or aim at what you are shooting at. And that to me takes a lot of fun and challenge out of the game. I do give *Doom* some credit for being more 'darker' and 'scarier', which is what I am into, but *Doom 64* just doesn't have what it takes to win over *Turok* this time. Sorry *Doom* lovers, it's the Dinos over Demons.

Adam Vancil
Loyal,WI

I received a lot of mail this month on the *Doom 64 vs Turok* debate, but what baffles me is how any of you would know, since as of today (3/30/97) *Doom 64* hasn't even been released. Still, for what's it worth, here's my opinion: *Turok* does have better weapons and enemies than *Doom 64*, but the fog is highly distracting and it's nowhere near as action packed or challenging as *Doom*. Plus *Doom* is much, much longer. Personally, I would say

both are essential purchases to corridor fans, but that's just me.

Dear Postmeister,

I have a few questions to ask.

1. I have heard a rumor that *MK4* will NOT have any kind of fatalities at all! Please tell me this isn't true because the FATALITIES are the main reason I play the game at all.

2. In the instruction booklet of *Twisted Metal 2* it said you could run over Santa Claus. However I couldn't find him anywhere. Where is he?

3. Since Prime Cable already has a Sega channel out will there ever be a Saturn channel?

4. When is *X-Men vs Street Fighter* coming out for Saturn?

Anon,
Las Vegas, NV

1. You only play *MK* because of the fatalities? I always feared that people like you existed, but up till now I was never quite sure. But now my mission is clear. I will not rest till gamers like you have been tracked down... and eliminated!

2. Santa Claus isn't real. It was your parents all along.

3. You could get a Net Link. That's the closest.

4. Some time this summer.

Dear Postmeister,

You suck. All you do is whine and cry about your precious box art and say how much better the Japanese market is. Well, if you like Japan so much, get on a boat and set sail, son. Or stop complaining and do something to make our market more like theirs, if indeed it is better. You print letters from people who give you dollars for Waffle Chips. What a loser. I'll buy you a bag of Waffle Chips and I'll tell ya where to stick each and every one of them. You hide in some goofball cave all the time casting your dispersions (*I think you mean 'aspersions.'* - Ed.) out on the American scene. If you would drag your carcass out once in a while you'd realize that when you insult the scene you insult the people in it. You act like, if you get a nice picture on the box, you'd be happy with paying \$70.00 for Pong. That's nothin' but a male cow with a substance that rhymes with spit.

I know you don't have the guts to print a letter like this. You're nothin' but an over-paid piece of trash. And that's the bottom line.

See ya in hell.

Demon
West Palm Beach, FL

You're wrong about me not printing your letter (even though you didn't send a buck—cheap-skate!), just like you're wrong about a lot of things. The Japanese gaming scene IS better than the American scene for the simple reason that more games get released over there. That's not a criticism of American gamers. That's a fact. And as for me complaining, how else are we going to change things if somebody

doesn't kick up a fuss? Of course I wouldn't pay \$70 bucks for Pong, even if it had the best box art in the world, but let me ask you this: if you were going to buy Pong would you rather it had good box art or not? Next time you write in, think things through first and maybe you won't sound like such a schmuck.

Dear Posty,

I write from Switzerland in Europe, and if I am write from so far, it's for tell you two important things.

First, your magazine is very, very better than what I can find in Switzerland. Poor French magazine! Your's is so professional. You do not to loose one's temper for a yes or a no. You love the reals games (you love Nintendo) and you do not turn inside your jacket all month. Brief, you are professionals.

The second thing is very important. You must know that in Europe, all the real video game passionates (like me) play with NTSC systems. So we play with full screen, initial speed and all the games who are made. It's unthinkable to play with European systems who's quality is so reduced!!

Brief, the real passionates play like you, with full quality. They too read quality magazine like your's (those who can) and not babie's magazines.

Conrad Zimmermann
Vevey, Switzerland

I had to print this letter—as is—because it made me smile so much. Conrad, your English may not be great, but you're definitely speaking my language!

Dear Posty,

What's up with the T-Rex's nostril on the cover of Issue 3, Volume 5? It looks as if Turok has carved the letters S.E.X. in it. Is this so, or is it just some strange skin disorder? What does it mean anyway?

Well, I must be going. I'm feeling really horny all of sudden.

Joey Connelly,
Stevenson, AL

Damn. You've uncovered our plot to subliminally corrupt and pervert America's youth. Now we'll have to abandon our plans to assassinate Senator Lieberman!

Postmeister,

I would like to let ya know that I enjoy GameFan more than any other mag (really!). I would also like to calm Mr. E. Storm by informing him that *Shining The Holy Ark* has a June release date in the US (good news!). However there are no current plans for a release of any kind of *Phantasy Star* game (bad news). I also have a couple of questions.

1. I have tried to order *Sacred Pools* to no avail. I know it was made by a 3rd party company but I don't know who. Is this game goin' to come out? If not, why?

2. Are there any plans for a *Panzer Dragoon 3*?

3. Is the cartridge that's goin' to be with *VF3 & Tomb Raider 2* goin' to be an 'upgrade' for future games?

4. If the cartridge is the way to go and it looks like M2 is a ways off, why don't Warp make D2 on Saturn? What's their next project after E0?

A final comment: Knightmare, you are my favorite, and I do understand NIGHTS!!

Lisa Malone
Bristol, TN

E. Storm is aware that Shining The Holy Ark is coming out here, but he thanks you for reminding him just the same.

1. There's no official word on *Sacred Pools*, but I hope they canceled it. FMV games are usually pretty poor.

2. Oh yeah! Check out *Other Stuff* this month for the latest.

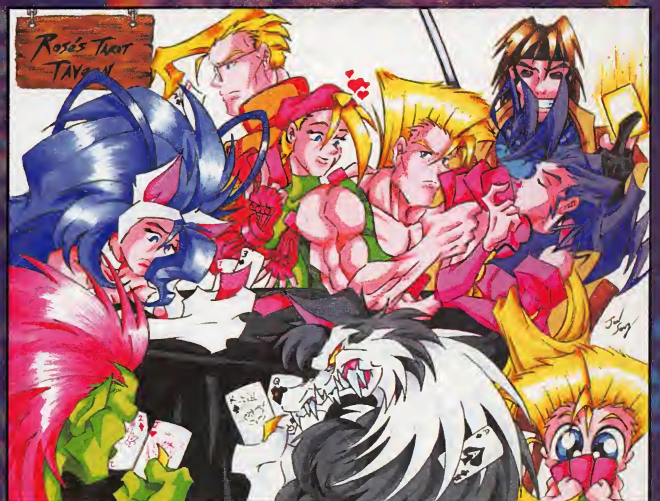
3. By the time you read this, you'll already know. But as of today we can only speculate. Some say it's just a straight RAM cartridge, while others say it's a complete system upgrade. Whatever the case, you can bet that Sega will use it for all future Model 3 conversions.

4. Even with the upgrade cartridge I doubt Saturn will be able to compete with M2's specs. Warp is currently working on *Real Sound*, a game that has no graphics and is played entirely using sound!!!

Oh, and Knightmare says thanks. He was beginning to think no one liked him.

Oh, and for the growing legions of 'Jen Seng-o-philes' out there, it's time for...

MORE JEN ART!!



Write to me or I'll run for President!

The Postmeister
5137 Clareton Dr. Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

IN DEVELOPMENT

(Continued from page 29)

We were then blindfolded and marched at gunpoint to one of Shiny's many top secret underground offices. What we saw there was a mid-spec PC running an incredible 3D graphics engine that produced the same effects as a high-end 3D accelerator card—only in software! It showed 60 fps characters so detailed you could actually see the bend in their clothes and the stretching of their skin as they moved their limbs. I was stunned! We were then gassed and returned to DP's office. We came to some hours later...

DP: So what did you think of the demo?

GF: (speechless)

DP: I thought so. We're going to show it at E3. The first level of the game is going to be playable.

GF: Can't you tell us anything about it?

DP: Well I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you. It's got an original idea to it.

GF: So do I take it that you're going to be doing a lot more PC stuff in future?

DP: We're committed to PC now. It's a platform that didn't make good games originally because the 2D cards were so slow. But now, in '96/'97 it's started to turn into a legitimate games machine. In '97/'98 it's going to be better than any console. So that's why we've got to start looking at it. These 3D cards, MMX processors, etc., are really adding some power.

THE TALL GUY...

GF: Have you been happy with the way the Earthworm Jim show's been going?

DP: For me? No. But the fans like it, so I'm not going to criticize it. But I'm more of an action hero kind of guy, and Jim has become more of a straight entertainment show. What kids are getting out of it is to just be entertained. What I wanted them to feel was that Jim was a hero. And so you'll find with our new products that we're leaning more towards that. With MDK we're hoping to get a movie, and Kurt's definitely a hero. You're not just going to sit and laugh at him and then go and buy a Batman toy. This guy would kick Batman's ass!

GF: Will the MDK film be live action?

DP: We don't know yet. There's a possibility



it could be CG. We've also had a movie offer for Earthworm Jim. That would be CG too.

GF: How about the Wild 9 show?

DP: The bible's done, the script's done, but we haven't started yet because everyone's first question is: When's the game going to ship?

GF: When's the game going to ship?

DP: (laughs) When it's finished.

GF: What games have you been playing recently?

DP: I've been playing Toshiinden 3 recently.

GF: Riiiiiggghhhht.

DP: I quite like it because its 60 frames a second. I like it because it offers you that feel. I'm concerned with the feel of games, I think it feels really good. Tekken 2, I thought was great. I played a lot of WaveRace—perhaps too much WaveRace. The games I'm playing on the PC are Diablo and Privateer 2.

GF: What's your philosophy behind making a game?

DP: You have to be able to sum the game up in one sentence.

GF: What's the philosophy behind MDK?

DP: You can shoot someone in the eye a mile away.

GF: What's the philosophy behind Wild 9?

DP: (smiles) First game you can torture someone in.

GF: Shiny's games tend to be relatively short. How important do you consider replayability?

DP: Replayability should come through mastery, and mastery comes through playing a game lot, and playing a game a lot is not something the public are prepared to do anymore.

GF: The curse of the MTV generation. But that shouldn't stop you making a game that offers decent depth.

DP: Oh we do. We make games for ourselves. I think that's our trick. MDK is a game everybody here would buy. I mean, if another company had done MDK I would've bought it. It's got the right mix of action and humor.

GF: Will you be making an EWJ3?

DP: The chances are very high. It will most likely appear on N64.

GF: How about an MDK sequel?

DP: The chances of an MDK sequel are incredibly small. Because we've just made the game, and the guys already have an idea for another (different) game. We're not going to milk it. We did that with EWJ2 and we've done nothing but regret it. We'll never do that again.

GF: So by that we can assume that EWJ3 isn't going to be anything like its predecessors?

DP: It won't be anything like what you've seen before. And the same with MDK2. It wouldn't be anything like MDK. EWJ3 will be in 3D. And that right there will change it a lot.

GF: A lot of people see the future of the industry as being multi-player networked games. No Shiny game has ever had a multi-player option. Why so?

DP: You kind of get carried away in America. Because networked gaming is popular here you feel it's popular everywhere else. In England the phone bills are really expensive, and in Germany they're even more expensive.

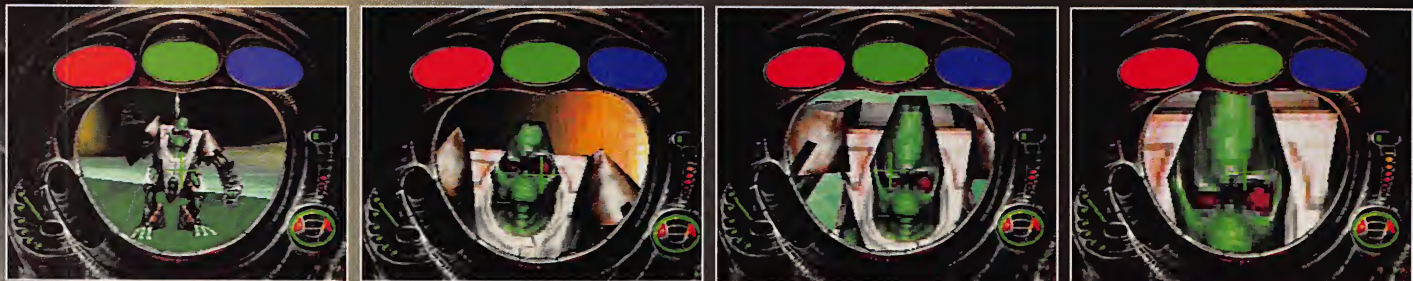
GF: Is Europe really that large a market for you?

DP: Half the world! We are huge in Europe. It's because most of the team is European and that following is huge. So I'd be so pissed if we did a game that just blew them off. The enemies in MDK speak their own language, so the game works in France, Germany, wherever!

GF: What about multi-player console games?

DP: The game has to be competitive then, and that's not the sort of games we do. The link cable was a great idea, but it just didn't work. It didn't make sense.

GF: Dave, thanks a lot for your time.



"We're committed to PC now. It's a platform that didn't make good games originally because the 2D cards were so slow. But now, in '96/'97 it's started to turn into a legitimate games machine"

OTHER STUFF

NINTENDO 64

Nintendo of Japan's publicist Yoshio Hongo was recently quoted as saying, "Zelda will be released on cartridge first. Then, we will release the 64DD version, and it will be completely different from the cart version. At this moment, we have two teams making *Zelda 64*. One is working on the cart version, and the other is working on the 64DD version." The latest word on the release date is fall/winter for Japan and 1st quarter '98 for the US.

The 64DD is going through some major changes. The unit will now include a special ROM chip which contains over 10,000 pre-sampled sound effects like drums, violins, explosions, etc. 64DD will also come with a phone jack built into the back of the machine, for network gaming! The speed of the phone jack will be handled by the CPU in the N64, and you will be able to call up a friend DIRECT and play. The 64DD is still down for a December release in Japan and should launch with 3 games: *Mother 3*, *Sim City 64*, and *Mario Paint 64*. The American version won't hit until Summer '98.

SEGA'S 64 BIT SYSTEM: DURAL!

The latest news on a 64-bit Sega machine is that the name will be Dural, not Black Belt (Black Belt will be the Saturn upgrade cartridge for VF3). Dural is still in development, and won't be complete for approx. another 6 months. Even still, Sega has already sent out emulator systems to their key developers. Dural will use Hitachi's new SH4 chip, a 64bit CPU that runs at 200Mhz and has a 16bit data bus. The graphics chip will be based around the new dual 3D FX card due to be released for PC at the end of this year. Sega has confirmed that Dural will have AT LEAST 16 megabytes of Ram, with 32 megs being a possibility. The CD-ROM is still a 12x speed drive, but that might also be upgraded to 16x speed. The Dural operating system was designed by Microsoft, just like the Saturn.

Sega of Japan is supposedly going to make an official announcement about Dural at the Tokyo Toy Show, which we'll have a full report on next month. Expect to see versions of *Virtual On 2*, *Virtual Striker 2*, *Virtua Cop 3*, *Scud Racer*, and *Virtua Fighter 3 Plus* when the machine hits next September in Japan.

FINAL ROUND!

Street Fighter 3 is coming to the PlayStation and Saturn in December this year. A 64DD version is rumored to be in development, but we have no confirmation. *Darkstalkers 3* for the PS will hit sometime in the 4th quarter of this year and should be playable at the E3. Other E3 titles to look forward to are *Ghouls 'n Ghosts 64*, and *Resident Evil 2*.

We have also just received confirmation that the *Street Fighter Collection* disc will include *Super Street Fighter 2*, *Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo* and *Street Fighter Zero 2 Alpha*, the unreleased upgrade to *Alpha 2*.

GAMEWORKS OPENING

SEATTLE, WA, March 15th. Nightmare and Substance D attended the star-studded gala opening of GameWorks, the new entertainment venture inspired by DreamWorks SKG, Sega Enterprises and Universal Studios. GameWorks was designed as, and I quote, "a place to connect with new people, play the hottest games, kick back with friends and escape." At the opening those friends included Will Smith, "Weird Al" Yankovic, Gillian Anderson, Beck, Coolio, Carmen Electra, Yu Suzuki and Bill Gates. We were all given unlimited access to both games and celebrities, and basically the whole day was a blast.

Currently there are two other GameWorks in development, one in Las Vegas and another in Ontario, Canada, though there are expected to be more than 100 around the world in the next five years. The site itself is split into three distinctly 'themed' sections.

The 'Arena' is the main downstairs area which features several signature games designed exclusively for GameWorks, such as *Vertical Reality*, a 24-foot *Virtua Cop* style game that actually lifts you up and down while you play. The 'Loading Dock' was where Coolio and Beck performed on a special stage that resembled a Night Club more than an arcade. The 'Loft' had a much more relaxed environment and is intended as an area where people can 'chill out' and meet other players, either on-line or face to face.

BITS OF TID...

- Nintendo aims to have *Zelda 64* playable at E3, along with six to eight other games. *Yoshi's Island 64*, *PilotWings 2*, *GoldenEye*, *Ken Griffey Jr. 64*, *Body Harvest* and *Buggy Boogie* should also all be present. The 64DD will be at the E3 but in demo form only.

- Sources at Namco have informed me that *Tekken 3* will not ship with an upgrade cart. Instead, Namco will attempt to convert the game as closely as they can without one. Namco will also be showing off their first two N64 games at the E3. One is a sports game and the other an RPG.

- The President of Sony Japan recently went on record as saying that the PS2 will not be released for another 3 to 4 years.

- SNK has officially announced that at present time they do not plan on releasing Neo-Geo 64 for the home market.

- Konami has announced their plans for the Tokyo Game show. Konami will show four N64 games: *Goemon 5*, *Hyper Olympics in Hagano*, *Akumajou Dracula 3D (Castlevania 64)*, and a fighting game called *Battle Dancers*. Only *Goemon 5* will be playable.

- N64 *Quake* is looking amazing, according to John Carmack, one of the original founders of

id Software. He also recently wrote, "We got DM5 (the only level small enough to fit before we take a lot of space saving measures) running perfectly in only two weeks. It looks like *GL Quake* (that's the SGI Onyx version of *Quake*) with 'picmip 1,' and it runs at 30fps."

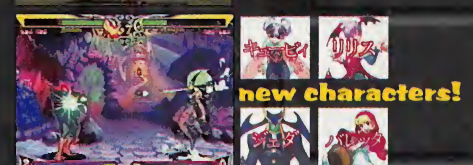
Inside GameWorks!



ABSOLUTELY POSITIVELY UP TO THE VERY LAST SECOND...



Here's *Tobal 2*, *Vampire Savior* and *Panzer RPG Azel*. I have no space so I'll just say tune in next month for more info on all three! See you then!



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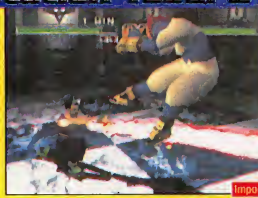
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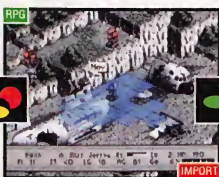
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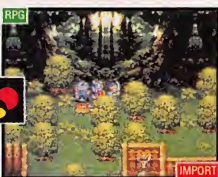
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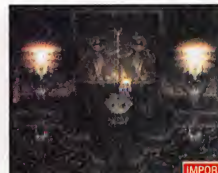
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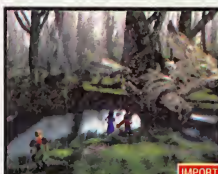
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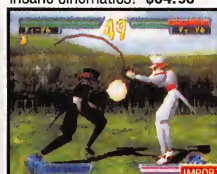
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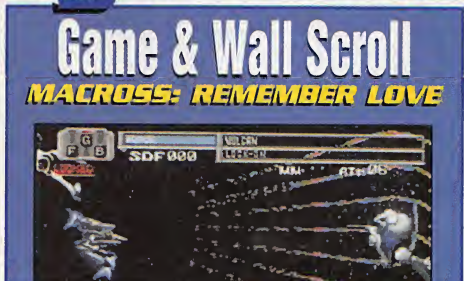


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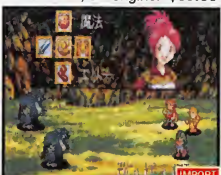
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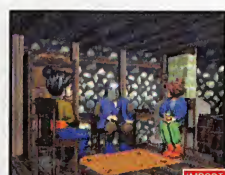
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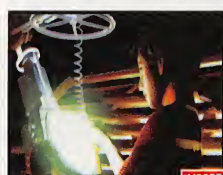
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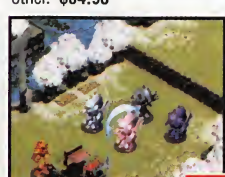
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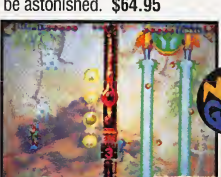
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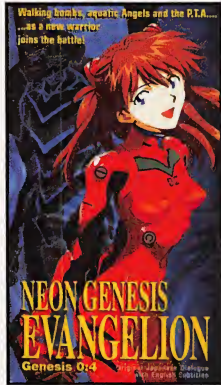
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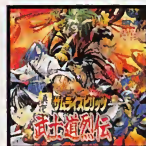
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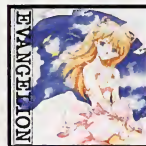
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